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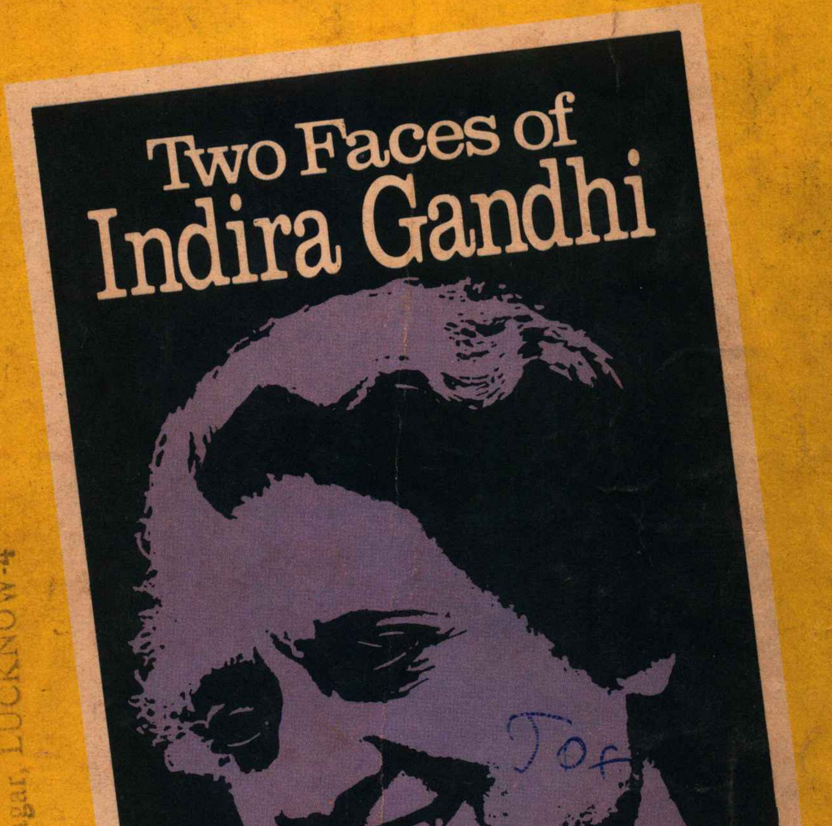
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For editorial, circulation and
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IMPRINT
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Bombay 400 023
Tel: 274330/274253/270310/270327

IMPRINT is a Business Press monthly publication with the publishing office located at Surya Mahal, 5, Burjorji Bharucha Marg, Bombay 400 023, India.

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on the marquee

IN AUGUST 1975, THE PRESS ADVISER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA persuaded me not to print the Independence Day greeting *Jai Hind* on this page. For the first time then, the On the Marquee page was left blank. I was then somewhere abroad and no amount of pleading with my man on the spot, helped. You can imagine what a lousy 15th of August that was for me — and many of you.

For August 15, 1976, I had engineered a protest by the members of the Tokyo Chapter of Amnesty International at the Indian Embassy in Tokyo against the continued detention without trial of political workers in India. With caution and care plans were finalised and everything was set to go. I was in exile and 'underground' and was not supposed to openly participate in political activity. Our Ambassador to Japan and his wife Rose Gonsalves were and are my friends. So on 14th August I slipped out of Tokyo. By 15th noon I learnt that there was no action. The ladies and gentlemen of the Tokyo Chapter of Amnesty International were told by the Indian Embassy that August 15 was a national holiday for India and the Embassy was not receiving any protests on that day! And the gentle Japanese just don't do anything as impolite as disturbing a foreign Embassy on a national holiday — their concern for political prisoners notwithstanding. The event was reduced to merely mailing a protest to the Embassy. You can imagine what kind of Independence Day that was for me — and for most of you.

Not unnaturally, from almost early April this year, I was looking forward to an occasion to celebrate come August 15, 1977. But some things are just not in my stars. Morarji Desai, with enthusiasm and sanctimonious determination announced there will be total Prohibition in four years. Till this day, Morarjibhai has not given a time-bound assurance for repealing MISA or for repealing the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution. Till now nobody in the Government has given a time-bound assurance to clean up the mess in Education. Till now nobody has given a time-bound assurance that the Janata Party will not collect black money from businessmen. A hundred more important tasks ahead but the Prime Minister finds reintroduction of Prohibition most important. We do not seem to learn even from tragic, prolonged disasters.

Then there was this discussion in the Parliament over the terms of employment of the chairman of the India Tobacco Company. That company has sales of some 300 crores of rupees per year. But the Janata MP's and the Government think that a salary and perks amounting to some Rs. 10,000/- per month are excessive for the chairman of that company. It is a sick mentality that arrives at such conclusions. Yes, of course, I know we have poor, poor people. All my adult life I have used more than 15 per cent of my not inconsiderable income from here and abroad to help the poor I know. I am able to do this because for years my salary was the equivalent of Rs. 65,000/- a month. Just because the Ministers pretend that they live on a salary of Rs. 3,500/- or so a month, must everybody else too in the managerial class be forced to follow suit?

Then there is this Coca-Cola affair. I detest that beverage. But what we are doing is reneging on an agreement. Coca-Cola was properly established in India. And there is no crime making Rs. 10 crores over 10 years for the parent company. The small men who are applauding this decision must remember that India too one day will become a net exporter. In some markets abroad we may even come to dominate sectors of the economy. What then? "Indians Go Home?"

The last straw was the President's Independence Day eve address to the nation. I felt as if the speech was written to publicise his desire to move to a 'simpler house'. By all means do this, quietly, but was this all that important to be included in the address? How about the million other things that confront us?

Well, that was August 15, 1977 for me. But I am free again, and so are you all. And the men who govern us today are basically honest, able men. There is still hope.

R. V. Pandit

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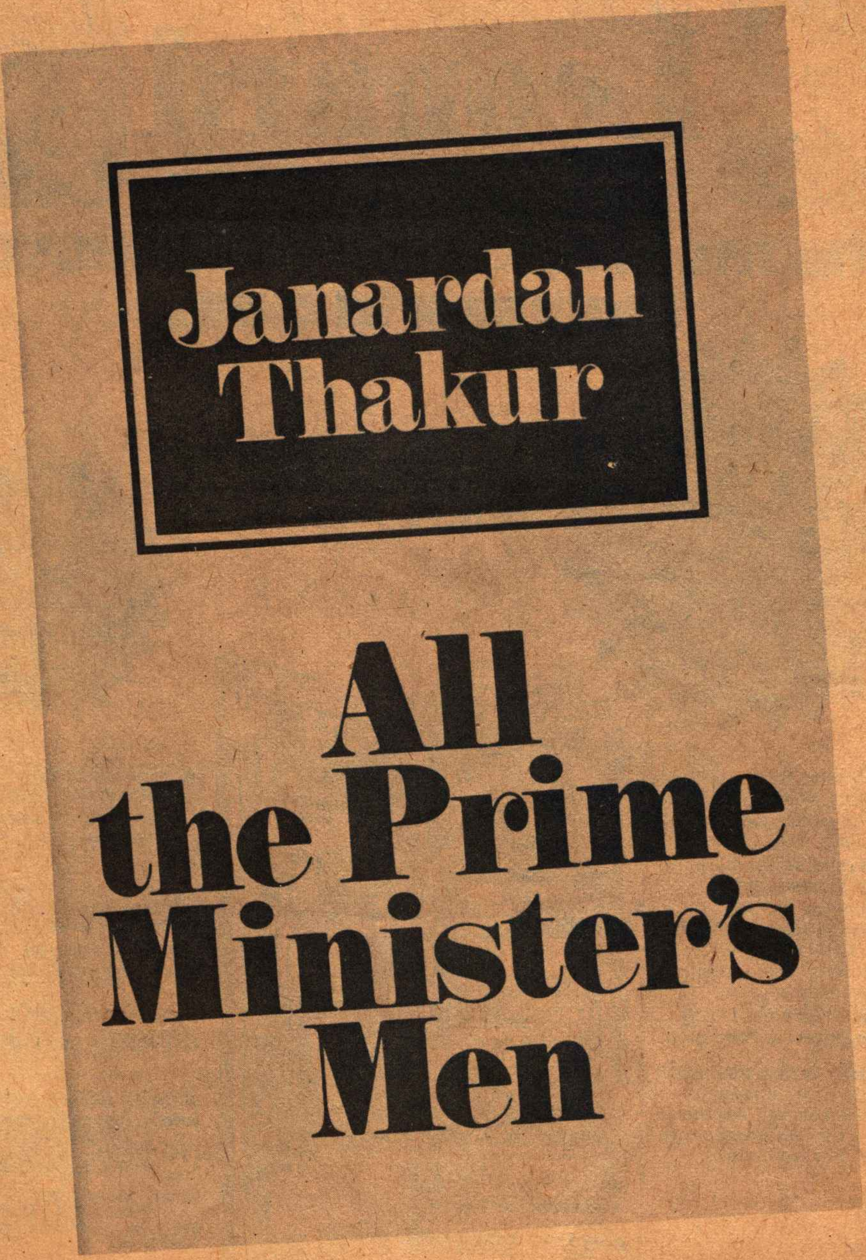

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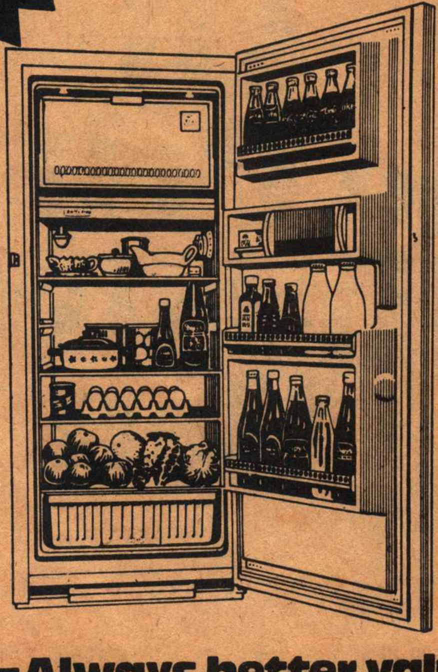

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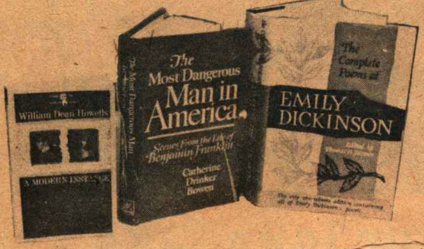
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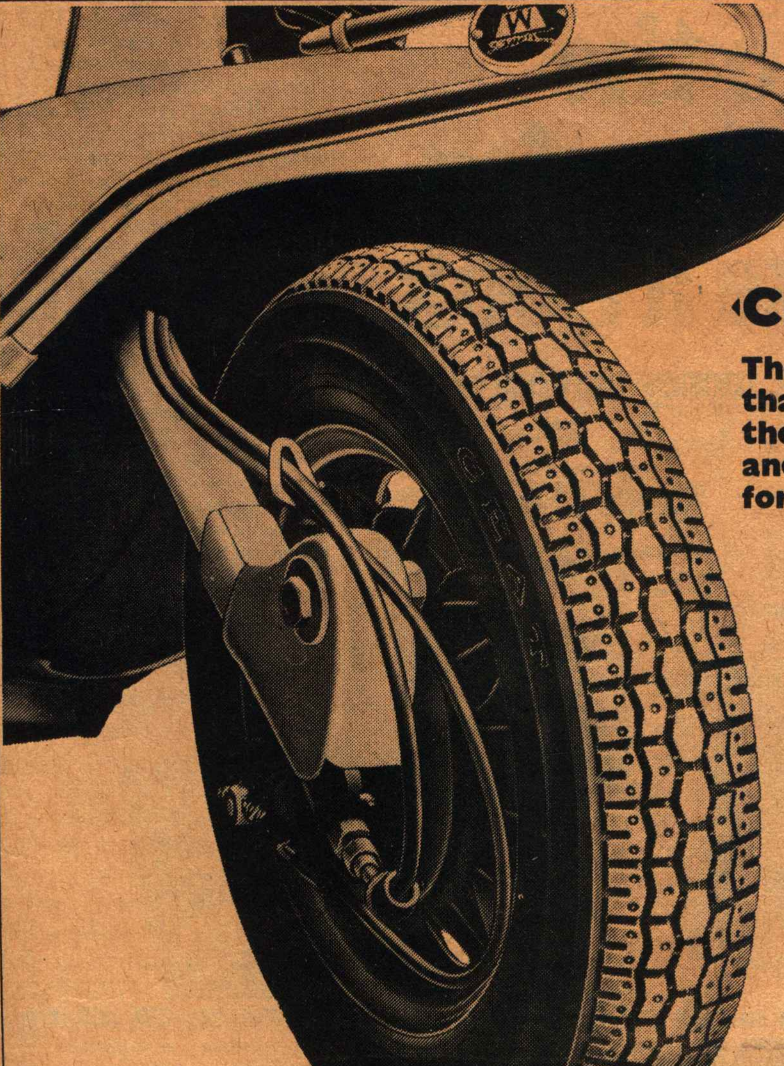

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LAST DAYS OF GOKHALE

By B. R. Nanda*

THE OUTBREAK of the war in Europe, the deadlock in the Royal Commission, and the failure of the negotiations initiated by Annie Besant for a united Congress combined to make the political landscape in early 1915 a bleak one, but Gokhale was not unduly depressed. Ever since the partition of Bengal, Indian politics had been tricky and unpredictable. But he had never given up hope; this was partly due to the fact that he took long-term views and could thus take setbacks and failures in his stride. He had a firm conviction that ultimately the destiny of India would be moulded by her people and particularly by the younger generation. 'Our best material', he would tell his English friends, 'is in our country.'

It was to harness the youth to patriotic service that Gokhale had founded the Servants of India Society. The Society was never far from his thoughts. At one time he considered giving up all other work, including his membership of the Imperial Legislative Council, to devote all his time to the Society. This he could not do, but he was never happier than when in the Poona Home of the Society. During his long absences from India in connection with Minto–Morley reforms and the Public Services Commission, he wrote long letters giving his disciples all the news and much good advice. The Society had started with four members in 1905; the number rose to eight in 1907, to ten in 1908 and to twenty-seven in 1915. Branches of the Society were opened in Madras in 1910, in Nagpur and Bombay in 1911, and in Allahabad in 1913. Gokhale talked of enrolling at least one 'Servant of India' for each of the 275 districts in the country. However, he found the recruitment and training of even twenty-odd members of the Society a tremendous task. He was extremely rigorous in his selection of new entrants. A university degree and an aptitude for, if not actual experience of, public work were essential qualifications. No one was admitted as a member until after he had seen something of the kind of life he was expected to lead, and had been adjudged suitable by Gokhale himself. The subsistence allowance was Rs 30 a month; it was raised to Rs 50 after the first five years. The earnings of the members (including Gokhale's savings from his allowances as a member of the Legislative Council) went to the Society.

As the First Member of the Society, Gokhale kept a vigilant eye on the members. The conduct of each member was carefully observed; the atmosphere in the headquarters of the Society was almost that of a college hostel, if not of a monastery. The members were allowed to marry, but families were not allowed to stay in the Home of the Society. Even Gokhale's two motherless daughters stayed in a small house with his widowed sister close to, but outside, the premises of the Society. We get a glimpse of the goings on in the Society's Home at Poona from the diary kept by Srinivasa Sastri, who seemed to be functioning in 1909 as the second-in-command (Second Member).

---

* From his book *GOKHALE – The Indian Moderates and the British Raj*, **published by Oxford University Press, 2/11 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002, 520 pages, Rs.80/-.**

Diary of Srinivasa Sastri, 3 July 1909
F.M. [First Member] asked me today to be strict about Mr Devadhar. Somebody had told him of his being late twice at night during his absence.

5 July 1909
Obtained leave for Kaikini to go to Bombay to consult a doctor. Goes in the afternoon today & returns Wednesday morning, as F.M. is to address us that evening.

6 July 1909
F.M. is to discourse on Finance on Friday. Debate led by Vaze on 'The Brahmans—Non-Brahmans'. Kaikini has returned.

11 July 1909
Admission in the morning of Messrs. Deole, Kunzru and Kaul . . .

16 August 1909
In the evening Mr G. [Gokhale] called us all together in his room & made a programme for each member.

8 September 1909
Some talk with Mr G. led to Mr Patwardhan's absence last night & Devadhar's frequent irregularities. At once they were sent for and rated in my presence. I feared it might lead to unpleasantness, but, thank God, both took it well.

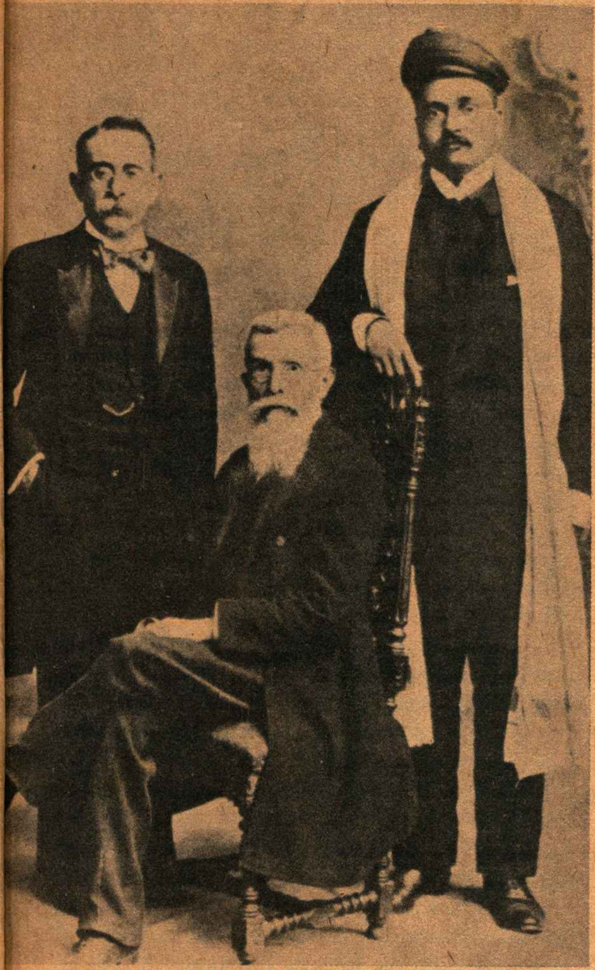
From Sastri's diary, we find that Majli, one of the probationers, overstayed his leave and was reported to the First Member. He was pulled up and he apologized, but resigned after a month. Sastri himself was upbraided by Gokhale for leniency to other members. Even Devadhar and Patwardhan, two of the founder members of the Society, were occasionally on the mat. The fact is that the standard of performance and discipline was much too exacting for some of the young men. Majli left in August 1909 and so did Deshpande. Another member, J. Krishna Rao, was weaned away by his father and father-in-law. A Muslim member, Syed Haider Hussain, who had joined the Society, found its discipline much too rigorous, resigned, and took a government job in Bihar.

On 12 July 1909 Sastri noted in his diary that the First Member wanted 'to give our little arrangements a stiff formal character. Needs Committee, Library Committee, General Advice Committee! I am to be convener of the two latter, & have two Proceedings Books.' Two days later, Gokhale wrote to Principal Paranjpye, requesting him to allow one of the newest members, H. N. Kunzru, to attend Professor Kale's lectures on economics in the Fergusson College.

In the Poona Home of the Society, the programme included debates in some of which Gokhale himself participated. Among the subjects debated were the 'Political Creed of the Servants of India Society', the 'Practicability of the Colonial Swaraj', the 'Principles of Social Reform', 'Native States', the 'Merits of a Congress Session in London', the 'Indian Police', 'Race Prejudice'. Occasionally, Gokhale delivered lectures on such subjects as 'Indian Finance as it is and as it should be', 'Our Work' and the 'Drain Theory'.

It was Gokhale's ambition to train these young men in the habits of ascetic simplicity, intellectual curiosity, methodical work and discipline, such as he had himself acquired at Ranade's feet. On 1 October 1910 Gokhale sent his disciples to Versova on the western coast to pay their respects to Dadabhai Naoroji. This was a 'pilgrimage' to instil in them love of the country and reverence for its great leaders. Gokhale insisted that no member of the Society under training should deliver a lecture or write an article without obtaining his approval. He knew the harm done by half-baked opinions of young hotheads. While he was away from India, he shuddered to think of the consequences of an indiscreet word or action on the part of any Servant of India. In 1908, when there was an outburst of terrorism in India, he wrote from London: 'It is most necessary that every one of the members [of the Society] should realize fully a special responsibility resting on us all. Tell Deodhar that he should keep his own enthusiasm & that of his two colleagues under the control of sound judgment.'

The Servants of India were engaged in a variety of political and social activities: organizational work for the Indian National Congress, journalism, education and social reform. In Poona the Society ran *Dnyanaprakash*, which was edited by Patwardhan. Later it acquired *Hitavada* of Nagpur and the *Hindustan* of Lucknow. The Society received calls for help in emergencies of all kinds. In 1907, it helped or-



Gokhale with Dadabhai Naoroji (sitting) and D. E. Wacha, London, 1897.

ganize a campaign against plague in Poona. Devadhar acted as the secretary of the Plague Relief Committee. In 1908–9, after the adoption of the new Congress constitution at Allahabad, the members of the Society were called upon to help in forming district Congress committees. Their assistance was sought for making arrangements for the annual Congress sessions. They collected funds for the British Committee of the Congress in London and subscriptions for its journal, *India*. When Wedderburn's biography of A. O. Hume, published soon after the death of the 'Father of the Congress', found few buyers, the Servants of India were called upon to push the sales. When Gokhale launched his Education Bill, some of the 'Servants' toured the country to mobilize public support for compulsory and free elementary education.

The Society had acquired a high standing in the country, but the responsibility of running it (the annual expenditure had gone up to Rs 40,000) had been a heavy burden on Gokhale. There were occasions when the Society ran out of funds and Gokhale had to request friends for contributions to keep it going. His failing health added to his concern about the future of the Society. As early as 1909 we find Srinivasa Sastri conveying Gokhale's anxiety to one of Gokhale's best friends.

Srinivasa Sastri to Krishnaswami Aiyer, 22 June 1909: . . . An eminent English doctor has told him that diabetes goes smoothly for some years, but once it takes a wrong turn—may gallop & finish the patient in a short time. . . .

He asks me what will happen to the Society after him, & whether it will turn out that he has been too bold to start it. 'I will do all I can while I live; but you get Krishnaswami to take it up after me, will you?'

One great cause of his condition is the embarrassment of our finance. The Press has been mismanaged all this time & though nothing is beyond repair, I fear we are very much to the worse. Matters have been nearly put right, but at what cost to the health & peace of mind of Mr. G. [Gokhale], I may best describe by saying that he once said he realized the condition of those that commit suicide.

The government's attitude to the Servants of India Society varied from the contemptuous to the critical. As we have already seen, the immediate reactions to its formation from the Viceroy downwards were far from cordial. A. T. Arundel, the Home Member, predicted that, despite initial enthusiasm during the lifetime of its founder, the Society would be wrecked by internal disputes, especially about money. 'If this Society survives and is widely patronized', Curzon wrote on 18 July 1905, 'it may turn out to be a very formidable organization exclusively devoted to political ends and only imperfectly masked under the assumption of loyalty to British rule.'

With such official preconceptions, it was only natural that the 'Servants of India' should have been subjected to police surveillance, even when they were engaged in such innocent activities as famine relief. In one of his speeches in the Imperial Council, Gokhale mentioned an incident in which a police detective not only trailed a Servant of India in the United Provinces, but insisted on 'sitting in the coach box of the hackney carriage engaged by him [the Servant of India] for going about'. In 1911, Srinivasa Sastri, who was in charge of the Madras Branch, fell foul of the Dewan of Mysore and was told in no uncertain terms that the Society was regarded as disloyal by the State.

With the political *détente* in the viceroyalty of Hardinge, official hostility to the Society somewhat softened. Guy Fleetwood Wilson, the Finance Member, visited Poona and saw the Society at work.

> The College buildings [he wrote] are of a superior character, the library is of the very first class and all the arrangements appeared to have been well thought out from every standpoint, including sanitation. The members number fifteen, and the permanent assistants five, making twenty-one in all, including Mr Gokhale. All the men I saw, who seemed to be between 20 and 30 years of age, impressed me most favourably. They had frank, open countenances, seemed quite at their ease, spoke with perfect freedom, and were altogether as nice as I should wish to meet anywhere.

Fleetwood Wilson had long conversations with the members individually and with Gokhale, but confessed that he could not get a clear idea of what the 'ulterior object' of the Society was. Fleetwood Wilson's difficulty stemmed from his own ambivalence. Like many of his other countrymen in India, he could admire Gokhale, tolerate and even appreciate his work for intellectual elevation and social reform, but became instantly suspicious of any leader or organization professing to train 'political missionaries'.

When its members were in residence at Poona under Gokhale's benign eye, the Servants of India Society resembled a political academy with a course of instruction in history, economics, public finance, law and journalism. Such an organization may have been redundant in a western country with long-established political institutions, but it had a useful role in India. The Society was, however, very different from the *ashrams* which Gandhi had set up at Phoenix and Tolstoy Farm in South Africa, and was to set up at Sabarmati and Sevagram. The *ashrams* of the Mahatma (who was training *satyagrahis* and not parliamentarians) emphasized ascetic simplicity and moral discipline rather than intellectual development and political culture. Even while he was in South Africa, Gandhi had been repelled by the academic and highbrow orientation of Gokhale's Society; he feared it would get out of touch with the realities of Indian life. Gandhi's misgivings grew after Henry Polak's visit to India in 1909–10. While still in South Africa, Gandhi seems to have had an uneasy feeling that he might not fit into the Servants of India Society when he returned to India.

> *Gandhi to Gokhale, 27 February 1914:* If there is a settlement in March, I propose to leave for India in April. I shall have with me probably about 20 men, women and children who will live with me. These will include the schoolchildren who are likely to come. I do not know whether you will want me to live at the Servants of India Society quarters in Poona or how. . . . I am entirely in your hands. I want to live at your feet and gain the necessary experience. . . .
>
> My present ambition you know. It is to be by your side as your nurse and attendant. I want to have the real discipline of obeying someone whom I love and look up to.

In the autumn of 1912, when Gandhi and Gokhale had envisaged that the former would join the Servants of India Society, both were aware of the intellectual gulf between them, but they hoped to bridge it with mutual affection and trust in each other. As soon as the settlement of the South African issue was in sight, Gandhi placed his services at Gokhale's disposal. But it was not until 9 January 1915 that Gandhi actually returned to India. Three days later, there was a party in Bombay in his honour at the residence of Jehangir Petit. Gandhi did not announce his future programme, but disclosed that he would be guided by 'his guru', the 'Hon'ble Mr Gokhale'. Gandhi had already promised Gokhale that for the first twelve months in India he would 'keep his ears open and his mouth shut'.

A few days' stay in Poona brought it home to Gandhi that Gokhale's enthusiasm for his admission to the Servants of India Society was not shared by most of its members, who feared that there was too great a divergence between Gandhi's ideals and methods and those to which the Society was pledged. As the decision on his admission was likely to take time, Gandhi planned a visit to Rajkot, Porbandar and Santiniketan. On 14 January 1915 there was a farewell party in Gandhi's honour in the Society's premises. Only fruits and nuts were served. Gokhale was not feeling well, but insisted on attending the party and fainted. He did not have long to live.

When the First World War broke out in 1914

Gokhale with the members of the Deccan Education Society, Poona, 1902 (Gokhale sitting fifth from left).

few people could have foreseen that it would last for four years. Indeed, the common belief was that it would all be over by the end of the year. It was, however, obvious that things would never be the same again and Indo-British relations would have to be readjusted. Shrewd British administrators were already applying their minds to post-war problems. Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay, requested Gokhale to suggest constitutional reforms which he considered essential and immediately practicable.

Willingdon to Gokhale, 26 January 1915: Many thanks for your letter. . . . By all means let the matter wait until next month [when] we can discuss. I have told the Viceroy that you were going to prepare some notes of your views for me. He expressed a great desire to see them. If you don't object, I should very much like to send them to him.

In the meantime, I hope you will have a talk with Aga Khan. He is most interesting on his experiences & would I think be an assistance to you. . . .

Before he set down his views on paper, Gokhale wanted to consult not only the Aga Khan, but also Pherozeshah Mehta who was still one of the best-respected leaders of the Indian National Congress. It was not easy for the three to meet. Gokhale was too ill to leave Poona, the Aga Khan had his own preoccupations, and the ageing Pherozeshah Mehta was himself not very mobile. As Willingdon seemed to be in a hurry, Gokhale decided, on 17 February, to prepare a rough draft of a scheme which could become the basis for further discussion with Pherozeshah and the Aga Khan.

The draft, which Gokhale pencilled two days before his death, envisaged provincial autonomy for the provinces. The Governor of each province was to be assisted by an Executive Council consisting of three Indians and three Europeans. Each province was to have a legislature consisting of 75 to 100 members, of whom 80 per cent were to be elected. While all laws—and the budget—were to pass through provincial legislature, the Governor retained the right of veto, and the members of his Executive Council did not require the support of the majority in the legislature to remain in office. Wider powers for taxation and borrowing were, however, to be given to the provincial governments. The Legislative Council at the centre was to be enlarged, and to have more powers, but the principle of an official (or rather nominated) majority was to be maintained. If a provincial legislature declined to enact laws which the government regarded essential in the vital interests of the province, they could be passed by the central legislature over the head of the provincial legislature. Such occasions were, however, expected to be few; this provision was obviously inserted to reassure the authorities and to overcome their reluctance to concede provincial autonomy. The Government of India was to be largely freed from the control of the Secretary of State for India—especially in fiscal matters. The India Council in London, it was proposed, would be abolished, and the position of the Secretary of State for India was to approximate as far as possible that of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

These constitutional changes, which Gokhale outlined in his draft, have been called his 'political testament'. They were nothing of the kind. Gokhale was not framing the outline of a model constitution for India. He was not defining the political goal of nationalist India, nor even writing an article for a newspaper. He was simply spelling out, at the request of the Bombay Governor, a scheme which could be expected to run the gauntlet of the provincial governments, the Government of India and the British Parliament, be acceptable to the British Government and yet satisfy political India in 1915. The scheme was modest enough, but British opinion was not ready for more liberal measures. Having only recently spent several months in England with the Royal Commission on the Public Services, Gokhale knew the obstacles in the way of any radical change. In 1914, the House of Lords had even rejected Lord Crewe's modest bill for indirect election of the Indian members to the India Council, and the House of Commons had turned down an innocuous proposal for an Executive Council to assist the Lt-Governor of the United Provinces. Early in 1915, Indian politics were quiescent, and the course of the war and the ferment it would generate could hardly be predicted. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable fact that this draft on post-war reforms, hurriedly pencilled by Gokhale in February 1915, already anticipated the tenor of the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms, which the British government was to concede four years later, after its hands had been practically forced by the cumulative pressure of political and economic discontent created by the war and its aftermath.

The drafting of the outline of constitutional reforms on 17 February must have required a great effort of will-power on Gokhale's part. His health was badly shattered even when he had landed at Bombay in November 1914. Cardiac asthma, aggravated by his seventeen-year-old diabetes, the tedium and tension of the long sittings on the Royal Commission and the English winter had played havoc with his constitution. He may well have looked forward to some quiet and rest at Poona, but soon after his return, he was drawn into the acrimonious parleys on the re-admission of the Extremists to the Congress. 'The fact is', Gokhale wrote to N. Subba Rao, the Secretary of the Indian National Congress, 'I have taken out of my system during the last week more than my system could stand.' Gokhale had indeed been making a heavy overdraft on his physical and mental reserves for a long time, and had little reserve strength. During the summer of 1914, when he was in England, his condition had been a source of constant anxiety to his friends. Even visits to Vichy for rest and cure had ceased to work the wonders they had done in previous years. He continually suffered from attacks of 'suffocation' at night. From 13 February these attacks recurred during daytime, and his condition grew worse. On Friday, 19 February, his condition became critical. That afternoon he said with a smile, 'I have been seeing the fun on this side so long, now let me go and see it on the other.' The end came at 10.25 p.m.

Two hours earlier he had taken leave of those of his faithful Servants of India who were in Poona. To Anantrao Patwardhan, the keeper of the Aryabhushan Press, he said: 'I have often scolded you. Please tell me before I die that you have forgiven me.' He gave instructions for the formation of a 'trust' (out of the royalties accruing from his arithmetic book) and its utilization for the education of his daughters and the children of the Servants of India. He bade farewell to his daughters, and to his friends Bijapurkar, Paranjpye and others. 'He did all this', Dr Deva wrote, 'as if it was an ordinary affair and that he happened to be changing his present abode for another. . . . He was conscious to the last. . . . In my practice extending to over twenty-four years I have never seen a man die as peacefully as that.'

'THE GREATEST INDIAN'

'MR GOKHALE was the greatest leader that India has ever produced,' wrote the *Statesman* on 21 February 1915, 'perhaps her greatest man.' A few days later, at a memorial meeting in London, Sir Krishna Gupta, a member of the India Council, referred to Gokhale as the greatest Indian of his time. Obituaries and memorial tributes often need to be discounted, but there is no doubt that at the time of his death, and indeed for nearly a decade before it, Gokhale occupied a unique place in the public life of India. 'You know', Mrs Besant had pleaded with him in 1914, 'that India cannot spare you and a month or two of rest may mean years of work.' 'You must remember', wrote Rabindranath Tagore in December 1913, 'that for a man like you to live is in itself a service to your country—for your life is not merely useful, it is a light to others.' In November 1913, when her own life hung precariously in the balance, the poetess Sarojini Naidu sent 'a message of love and gratitude' to Gokhale: 'You have been a beacon light of hope to the young generation.' She was reflecting the feelings of many others, of Motilal Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru, C. Y. Chintamani, M. R. Jayakar, M. A. Jinnah and, above all of M. K. Gandhi of South African fame, who was to mourn Gokhale's death by walking barefoot for a year.

It was no mean achievement for a man who had started life without the advantages of birth or fortune to have attained such pre-eminence. Gokhale had forged his way to the forefront of Indian politics by 1902, but from 1905, when he presided over the Benares Congress, until his death in 1915, he was, to use the expressive phrase of Mohammed Ali (the future Khilafat leader), the 'First Moderate'.

Gokhale owed his rise primarily to his own outstanding ability, industry and public spirit. His ambition to excel in everything he attempted, whether it was a college examination, a magazine article, a public speech or a game of billiards, had turned him early in life into an assiduous student of politics. He was lucky enough to serve his political apprenticeship under Ranade, who instructed him in the principles of a humane, liberal and secular nationalism, besides giving him a thorough grounding in Indian politics and economics. To be Ranade's protégé was an obvious asset. The Bombay Moderates, led by Ranade's friend, Pherozeshah Mehta, who disliked and distrusted Tilak, were glad to find in Gokhale an able Maharashtrian politician who could act as a counterweight to Tilak. Gokhale owed his election to the Imperial Legislative Council—which proved to be a turning-point in his political career—largely to the support he received from Pherozeshah Mehta. Again, it was Wedderburn—another friend and admirer of Ranade—who helped Gokhale shape into a successful unofficial envoy of his country to England. Wedderburn initiated Gokhale into the mysteries of British politics and introduced him to ministers, politicians, editors and officials in London who were concerned with Indian affairs. Gokhale shed his early shyness and diffidence and learnt to be at home in England, addressing public meetings in London and the provinces, briefing friends of India in Parliament, crossing swords with Anglo-Indian officials and interviewing British ministers in Whitehall.

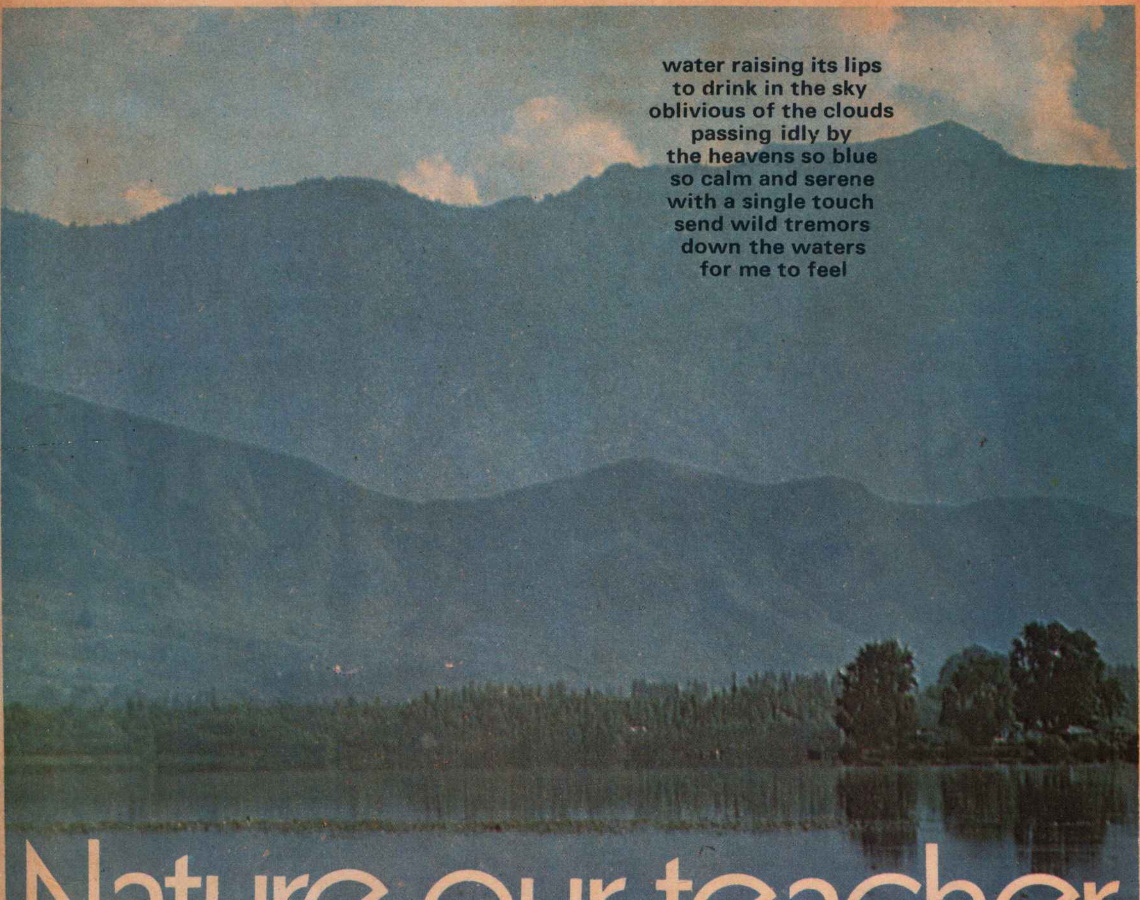
The clarity, conviction and courage with which he spoke up for his country raised Gokhale's stock with the Indian educated classes. What impressed them was not the 'moderation', but the sharpness of Gokhale's indictment of the policies of the government. The fact that this indictment rested on carefully marshalled facts and arguments made it all the more powerful. As they read or heard Gokhale, educated Indians felt that he was articulating their own inmost thoughts and aspirations. They also saw in Gokhale an embodiment of personal sacrifice and dedication, which they admired, but could not bring themselves to emulate.

Gokhale vowed himself to voluntary poverty for life, first as a member of the Deccan Education Society, and then as the First Member of the Servants of India Society. He viewed politics not as the pursuit of power or influence on behalf of individuals or groups, but as a lever for the regeneration of his country. This idealistic conception of politics seemed to fit in with the needs of a subject race struggling to be free; it did not sound hypocritical when it was expounded by a man whose words never went beyond his deeds. Gokhale saw how well trained and organized the British bureaucracy in India was; he saw what little chance there was of challenging its monopoly of power without enlisting an equivalent measure of talent, training and discipline in the nationalist ranks. This was why he set out to build a cadre of 'political missionaries' through the Servants of India Society.

In India, more than perhaps in any other country, a charisma tends to grow around a public figure who is seen to be utterly selfless. Gokhale's call for renunciation struck answering chords among his countrymen. Not only did he live a simple and austere life, but in the long years of negotiation and discussion preceding the Minto–Morley reforms, he never sought the slightest advantage for himself. He was remarkably free even from that occupational disease of politicians—vanity and self-advertisement. When it was suggested to him during his visit to Madras in 1907 that he should lay the foundation-stone of a new building, Gokhale protested that he deserved no such honour, that too much was made of the too little done by public figures in India, and that men like him had 'to think of the vast work that lies in front of them compared with what little they may have been privileged to attempt'.

It was this extraordinary self-effacement which led R. P. Paranjpye to remark that Gokhale's 'patriotism was pure gold with no element of dross in it'. Lovat Fraser, the editor of the *Times of India*, who was no friend of Gokhale, but saw something of him in London during his last years, noted that he had 'in his heart spiritual hunger. From his youth he was vowed to poverty, and when one met him clad in silk hat and frock-coat in the lobby of the House of Commons, one knew that he secretly loathed these trappings. His mild and gentle eyes shone with the light of soaring thoughts, and only his love of country kept him to his self-appointed path.' The dinner tables of London—in the words of Cobden—may have had their 'insidious attractions for the simple-minded', but they failed to seduce Gokhale. Till the last he continued to fight tenaciously for a better future for his country. And till the last he remained the *bête noire* of successive Viceroys, and high officials in Calcutta, Simla and London.

It was not only the British bureaucracy which questioned Gokhale's bona fides. In Maharashtra, and especially in Poona, he was often maligned by his political opponents as a traitor or a coward. It was all part of a political vendetta which stemmed from personal rather than ideological animosities. In this vendetta Gokhale—like his mentors Agarkar and Ranade before him—was generally at a disadvantage. His antagonist, Tilak, with the halo of recurrent imprisonments in British jails, and as the reputed defender of the Hindu faith and orthodoxy, enjoyed a charismatic appeal in Maharashtra which Gokhale and his fellow-Moderates, with their constitutional methods and secular philosophy, could never attain. In the Marathi press, there was a continual sniping at Gokhale; he was lampooned by cartoonists, and vilified in malicious verses sung in the Ganapati festival processions in Poona. For this smear-campaign, Tilak may not have been directly responsible, but he does not seem to have done very much to stop it. Between the rival parties in Poona—the Moderates and the Extremists—it was almost a thirty years' war, sometimes 'cold', sometimes 'hot', which was to end (and even then not completely) only with Gokhale's death in 1915. While Gokhale's body was being consigned to the flames on the



water raising its lips
to drink in the sky
oblivious of the clouds
passing idly by
the heavens so blue
so calm and serene
with a single touch
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afternoon of 20 February, Tilak paid a magnificiant public tribute to Gokhale, but the Extremist bitterness towards Gokhale may be glimpsed from the entry in the diary of G. S. Khaparde (a friend and follower of Tilak), on the same day: 'In the Bar Room I heard that Gopal Krishna Gokhale died yesterday night. I am sorry he did not live long enough to endure the consequences of his double-dealing and roguery.'

The tragedy of Gokhale, as his friend, K. Natarajan of *Indian Social Reformer*, graphically described it, was that 'a proud and sensitive spirit was forced by the stress of self-imposed duties to expose itself to frequent galling wounds'. Gokhale shed some of his hypersensitivity after the terrible ordeal of the 'apology incident' in 1897, but he never developed a thick enough skin. He would have suffered less if he had not thought of politics as a game to be played according to the rules of Westminster. He would have suffered less if he had possessed the stoicism of his master, Ranade, the nonchalance of his rival, Tilak, or the egotism of his eminent contemporary, Pherozeshah Mehta.

As it was, the never-ceasing duel with his political opponents in Poona was a great strain on Gokhale's dwindling reserves of physical and nervous energy. Indeed, had it not been for his election to the chairmanship of the municipality of Poona, he would have left Poona for good and settled in Bombay in 1902. Fortunately, after his election to the Imperial Council, he had ceased to be a man of Poona or of Bombay. His influence extended beyond the bounds of the Deccan and western India; he came to be respected as much in Calcutta and Madras as in Lahore and Allahabad. No other Indian politician of the time, with the possible exception of Dadabhai Naoroji at the turn of the century, commanded such high prestige among the Indian élite outside his own province. The fact is that most Congress leaders were bogged down in local politics and controversies: this was as true of Pherozeshah Mehta and D. E. Wacha in Bombay as of B. G. Tilak in Maharashtra, Surendranath Banerjea and B. C. Pal in Bengal, G. S. Khaparde and R. N. Mudholkar in Berar, and Lajpat Rai in the Punjab. Gokhale, who had outgrown regional and sectarian loyalties early in his life but had failed to strike strong roots in his home region, Maharashtra, was well suited for a role on the national stage.

It was characteristic of Gokhale that in Bombay his best friends and hosts were not Maharashtrian Brahmans, but Gujarati and Parsi families, and that the two 'trustees' he nominated to look after his daughters after his death were both Gujaratis. His Servants of India were recruited from different provinces; his successor, Srinivasa Sastri, was a South Indian. He was one of the few Congress leaders who continued to carry some weight with the Muslim community. And despite the nagging official suspicion of his motives, the more far-sighted Englishmen learnt to recognize in him a bridge-builder between India and Britain. 'The most statesmanlike mind I have known', was the verdict of H. W. Nevinson, the well-travelled correspondent of *Manchester Guardian*. To Sir Henry Cotton, a former Chief Commissioner of Assam and a member of the British Committee of the Congress, Gokhale seemed 'an ideal interpreter between India and England'. G. P. Gooch, the British historian and Liberal member of Parliament, who had an opportunity of coming into contact with 'almost all the leading performers on the Indian stage' before and after the First World War, records in his memoirs that he was most impressed by Gokhale in whom he saw 'not only a great Indian, but a citizen of the world'.

Gokhale had begun his life as a teacher; he loved English literature and especially English poetry. He had in some ways the approach of a scholar to politics. His speeches and conversation had a fine literary flavour, but it would be wrong to think of him as an intellectual who had strayed into public life. Even though he was conscientious about his teaching chores, his heart was always in politics, with all their excitement and heartache. Neither academic laurels nor the seductions of authorship could divert him from his self-imposed tasks in public life. He declined to serve as principal of the Fergusson College, and even his project of writing a biography of Ranade had to give way to the urgent claims of public duties. With his increasing immersion in politics, Gokhale gave up physical exercise and the hobbies of his youth. Politics became a constant preoccupation, almost an obsession with him. He had little time for personal affairs. His two motherless daughters—who lived not far from the Home of the Servants of India Society—saw little of him. No wonder he should have found it impossible to take even the first yoga lessons on the concentration of the mind. 'Directly he set himself to the task,' a friend recalled, 'visions of blue books and government resolutions appeared before him to distract his attention.'

Gokhale's consuming interest in politics stemmed from his passionate patriotism. He hated foreign rule, but he did not blame all the ills from which India suffered on the British. He wanted her to shake off the shackles of social and economic backwardness as well as of political subjection. He wanted to turn the encounter with the Raj into an opportunity for building a secular, modern and democratic society. The task was formidable. 'I sometimes think', he wrote, 'that no country in the world has been called upon to face such a problem as ours.' The inculcation of discipline and team-work seemed to him essential prerequisites for a healthy political life. 'Our public life is weak', he observed, 'because our public spirit is weak.' And public spirit required the subordination of individual gain and convenience to the collective good.

'We are most of us in India . . . ', Gokhale said, 'a somewhat dreamy race. . . . Dreams have their importance in shaping aspirations for the future, but in practical matters, we have to be practical men.' He called for honest, unremitting application to the work in hand. It was characteristic of him that he should have advised the young graduates of Bombay, aspiring to enter public life, to make a beginning by cleaning the dust from the books of the Royal Asiatic Society Library.

Gokhale's political ideals were the ideals of the founding fathers of the Congress. The chief formative influence in his life was, of course, Ranade, who, in turn, had been inspired by the example of Dadabhai Naoroji. Gokhale used to describe himself 'as an intellectual grandson of Dadabhai Naoroji'. There was a striking unanimity among the early leaders of the Congress in their approach to politics. Gokhale's own contribution to (what may be called) the Moderate Congress ideology was to impart to it greater clarity, coherence and sophistication. He was no defender of the *status quo* in the political, social or economic sphere. Nor did he idealize the masses; in accordance with the liberal thought of the time, he considered literacy as a *sine qua non* for an intelligent interest in politics. If he assumed that there would be no franchise for the illiterate masses in his country, it was not for all time. Indeed, one of the avowed objects of his campaign for free and compulsory education was to bring the mass of the Indian people more effectively into the mainstream of national life. That he should have always felt an affinity with the unprivileged millions among his countrymen is not surprising; he had himself sprung from them. In his youth, he had known the pinch of poverty, and all his adult life he had lived simply, almost austerely. 'The sadness of an Indian village', wrote one of his British colleagues on the Public Services Commission, 'was never very far from him.'

Gokhale's exposition of the nationalist case was almost invariably a notable achievement and occasionally a triumph. But the same cannot be said of his management of men and events. In the Indian National Congress, he never tried to organize a personal following: even when his prestige was at its peak, he commanded more respect than authority. The result was that at crucial moments, such as at the Surat Congress in December 1907, he could exercise only a limited influence on the course of events. During the same year, when communal disturbances occurred in East Bengal, he hastened to Calcutta and stayed there for a fortnight, but his role was no more than that of a distressed observer. Two years later, on the crucial issue of separate electorates, he was completely outplayed by the Aga Khan–Ameer Ali group. If the South African crisis of 1913–14 had a happier ending, the credit for it was largely due to Gandhi.

As a politician, Gokhale seems to have suffered from the defects of his virtues. His complete freedom from racism, communalism and casteism predisposed him to underrate the strength of these dark forces in others. His instinctive aversion to acrimonious controversy, his extreme sensitivity to criticism and his natural disinclination to hit back at his enemies often placed him at a disadvantage. His lofty ideal of 'spiritualizing' politics was practicable only in small groups; it enabled him to kindle the pure flame of patriotism in some of the finest young men and women who came under his spell, but it could not protect him against the savage assaults of his political opponents or the calculated stratagems of the hard-headed guardians of the Raj. His faith in the virtues of rationality and moderation may have been admirable, but it was a fallible guide in a world largely swayed by irrationality and expedience. Gokhale, however, shared this faith with most of his great contemporaries among the Moderates. To assess his achievements and limitations it is essential to see him in the context of the Moderate era, which was more or less conterminous with his own political career. **THE END**

BEYOND LIGHT

By Isaac Asimov

Widening the Spectrum

FOR uncounted thousands of years, the only information reaching mankind from the skies was by way of the light of the visible bodies located there.

Nor did anyone conceive that there might be more than that, that there might be light coming from objects in the sky, light that could not be seen. The very notion that there was such a thing as light that could not be seen would surely have struck anyone as a ridiculous paradox.

The first indication that such a thing could exist came in 1800 when William Herschel was studying the heating effect of various parts of the solar spectrum. He placed a thermometer in various parts of the spectrum and noted the temperature rise. It would have been natural to suppose that a thermometer placed beyond the spectrum would show no temperature rise since there was no sunlight visible there. When, however, Herschel placed the thermometer just beyond the red end of the spectrum, he found the heating effect actually greater there than anywhere within the spectrum.

Apparently, there were rays of sunlight that were refracted even less than red light was, and those rays the human eye could not detect. These rays came to be called "infrared radiation" ("below the red").

Light did more than affect the eye. It brought about a breakdown of silver chloride, liberating metallic silver and, in this way, darkening the white compound. (It was this which a couple of decades later became the basis of photography.)

The German physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter (1776-1810) studied the effect of different portions of the spectrum on this breakdown. It was known that the violet end of the spectrum was more effective in breaking down silver chloride than the red end was, but in 1801 Ritter found, to his amazement, that the silver chloride broke down most rapidly when placed beyond the violet end of the spectrum where the eye could see nothing.

Ritter had discovered rays in sunlight that were refracted even more than violet light was, and these were called "ultraviolet radiation" ("beyond the violet"). As the nineteenth century opened, then, it became clear that the solar spectrum did not represent the entire range of sunlight. There was radiation beyond either end, radiation to which our eyes were insensitive.

In 1803 the English physicist Thomas Young (1773-1829) demonstrated that light consisted of tiny waves of varying wavelengths, and the French physicist Augustin Jean Fresnel (1788-1827) worked out the mathematical details in 1814.

To recapitulate some of the material in Chapter 8, the wavelengths of light are too small for any ordinary measure of length to be used conveniently. Ångström, in his study of the solar spectrum, made use of a unit equal to a ten billionth of a meter, and that is called, in his honor, an "Ångström unit," abbreviated Å.

It turned out that the wavelength of light was shortest at the violet end of the spectrum and increased steadily to the red end. The wavelength at the extreme violet end was just under 4000 Å, while at the extreme red end it was just over 7000 Å. The longest wavelengths were thus almost twice the shortest so that, by analogy with the situation with sound waves, the light spectrum can be said to extend over one octave.

Ten Ångström units are equal to a "millimicrometer" (a thousandth of a millionth of a meter), which nowadays is termed a "nanometer." In nanometers, the proper metric unit, the purple region of the spectrum centers about the 410 mark, while for the remaining colors the central wavelengths are blue, 470; green, 520; yellow, 580; orange, 600; and red, 650.

Each different kind of atom emits light at characteristic wavelengths and, under other conditions, absorbs light at those same wavelengths. The dark lines of the solar spectrum represent wavelengths of light absorbed by the relatively cool atoms in the solar atmosphere.

Viewed from the standpoint of the wave theory of light, it would seem that the sun (and, presumably, other stars as well) emitted light in a broad range of wavelengths and that the eye was only capable of receiving a restricted portion of that range.

The eye's specialized ability is not surprising. At the temperature of the sun's surface, the peak of the radiation is in the middle of the visible range, so that in the course of evolution the eye adapted in such a way as to react to the kind of light that was available in highest concentration. Indeed, at a wavelength of 556 nanometers, we have both the peak of solar radiation and of optical sensitivity.

What *is* surprising is that the atmosphere happens to be transparent to just this peak range of solar radiation. There is no fundamental reason why it should be. After all, while it permits the wavelengths in and near the solar spectrum to pass, wavelengths markedly longer or shorter do *not* pass through the atmosphere.

The short wavelengths of the ultraviolet are absorbed by ozone, an energetic form of oxygen, which is found in the upper atmosphere. The result is that at the Earth's surface, no wavelengths less than 292 nanometers are received from the sun or from other objects in the sky.

The long wavelengths of the infrared are absorbed by water vapor in the Earth's atmosphere and by carbon dioxide, and in general there are only a few widely separated wavelengths that are received from the sun and other objects in the sky longer than a wavelength of 1400 nanometers.

Had it been otherwise and had the range of transparency been differently placed, the world might have been much dimmer than it is, the sense of sight less important—and astronomy might never have developed.

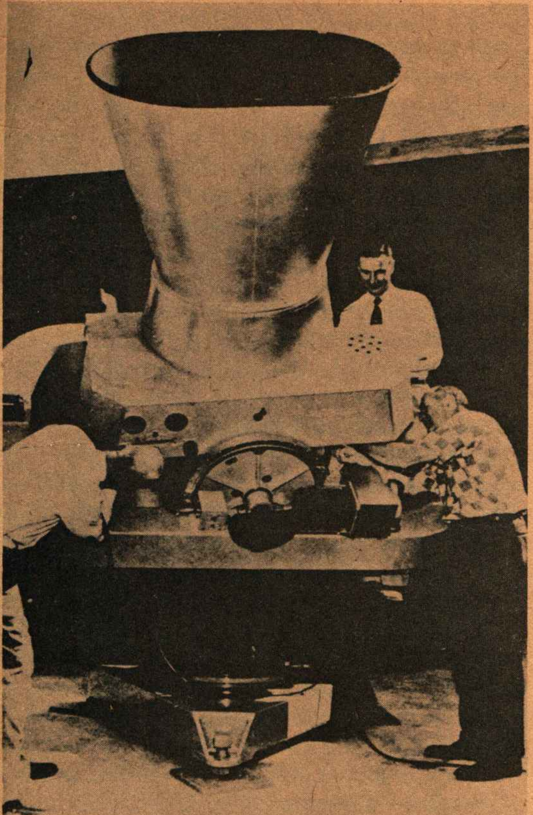
The interference of the atmosphere did not prevent astronomers receiving half an octave of ultraviolet and a whole octave of infrared, in addition to the well-known octave of what had now to be called "visible light." Could these extensions of the spectrum be dealt with as the visible spectrum could?

In 1850 the Italian physicist Macedonio Melloni (1798-1854), having found that crystals of sodium chloride are much more transparent to infrared radiation than glass is, constructed lenses and prisms of that substance and showed that infrared radiation could be refracted, spread into a spectrum, and show all the behavior of ordinary light. It was the final evidence that "invisible light" differed from ordinary light only in wavelength, that it could be treated as ordinary light and made to yield information.

Of the two types of beyond-the-visible-spectrum light, ultra-violet offers a smaller problem. It can be easily photographed even though its region of the spectrum seems black to the eye and indeed is automatically included in any spectrograph, provided it is not absorbed.

That means that the recording of the ultraviolet portion of the spectrum places additional constraints on telescopic equipment. Even that part of the ultraviolet which can get through the atmosphere may not survive passage through glass. Glass absorbs light more readily as the wavelengths grow shorter. The thickness of the lens of the 102-centimeter (40-inch) Yerkes refractor absorbs virtually all of the ultraviolet radiation of the sun. Consequently, the study of the ultraviolet portion of the spectrum requires reflectors, and furthermore, it requires an aluminum-fronted mirror rather than a silver-fronted mirror since aluminum is a far more efficient reflector of ultraviolet than silver is.

The influence of light upon chemicals becomes less as the wavelength becomes longer. It is harder to photograph the long-wave orange and red light and still harder to photograph infrared radiation. The first to succeed in doing so was the English chemist William de Wiveleslie Abney (1843-1920) who, in 1874, worked with dyes sensitive to



The Baker-Nunn Camera was designed for the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory to photograph artificial satellites. Instruments like this 1957 model and later versions are in operation around the world. James G. Baker, the optical designer, used Schmidt's principle, though in a more complex form with a correcting "plate" having three glass elements with four aspheric and two spherical surfaces. This was necessary to provide sharp images over the wide field of view for light from the violet through the deep red. *Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory*

the red end of the spectrum and beyond.

In the late 1930s the American astronomer Charles W. Hetzler, using the Yerkes refractor and infrared-sensitive film, detected a number of cool stars with surface temperatures of from 1000° C. to 2000° C. At such temperatures, stars deliver only small quantities of visible light but larger amounts of infrared radiation.

Infrared radiation can also be detected by having it induce some effect that produces a change in an electric current, something that can be measured with delicate precision.

Rosse was the first to take advantage of this. He used a "thermocouple," which is a junction of two different metals. A small current flows across this junction and the size of that current increases with temperature. By focusing infrared radiation upon the thermocouple, the temperature is made to rise by an amount proportional to the quantity of radiation. By measuring the small electric currents induced in a thermocouple placed at the focus of a reflector, Rosse could measure the infrared radiation emitted by the full moon. (Again, large lenses do not transmit enough infrared radiation to allow the procedure to work with refractors.)

In 1880 Langley devised the "bolometer," in which a blackened metal foil is heated by infrared radiation focused upon it by a reflector. Its electrical resistance varies sharply with temperature and this can be measured so delicately that a temperature change of a ten thousandth of a degree can be detected.

In the 1920s the American physicist William Weber Coblentz (1873-1962) placed a bolometer in a vacuum, thus multiplying its sensitivity. He was able to measure the infrared radiations of stars for the first time.

One difficulty in measuring infrared radiation is that whereas objects must be red hot in order to emit visible light, they need be only warm to emit infrared radiation. The atmosphere is also transparent to infrared radiation in the regions of 4000 and also 10,000 nanometers. Even the walls of the telescope tube are warm enough to give radiation at these wavelengths. There is thus infrared arriving at the image from all directions. This "background radiation" can blot out dim sources in the sky, and astronomers working with the infrared have problems like those they would have in trying to observe stars by visible light in the daylight.

To do very fine infrared work, therefore, astronomers in the last few decades have taken to refrigerating all the equipment used, sometimes down to temperatures quite close to absolute zero. (This is the equivalent to darkening a room in order to detect faint sparks of light.)

There are advantages, too, in the infrared. In general a telescopic mirror has to have a shape deviating from the mathematical ideal by amounts in the range of the wavelength of the light you want to observe.

Since infrared radiation has longer wavelengths than visible light, the mirrors used can be a little sloppier.

For instance, to work in the infrared region, astronomers at the California Institute of Technology began with an aluminum dish that was approximately paraboloid. They then poured a slow-setting resin into it and kept the dish at a constant rapid rotation for three days. The resin, whirling with it, assumed a paraboloid shape and set, permanently, in that shape. The final result was not accurate enough to handle visible light but could deal adequately with infrared.

The mirror is then rocked gently twenty times a second while everything else is held steady. Under such conditions, the general smear of infrared radiation from the background produces an electric current with one kind of characteristic while the tiny sources in the sky, moving back and forth, produce an electric current with another kind. The latter then stand out against the background.

With the sophisticated instruments of today, tens of thousands of infrared sources in the sky have been detected, along with much information that could not have been obtained as easily by way of ordinary light. Molecules (made up of groups of atoms) have characteristic absorptions in the infrared portion of the spectrum and in this way one can detect carbon dioxide in the atmosphere of Mars and ammonia in that of Jupiter with great certainty.

Through the middle of the 1880s, astronomers could easily suppose that even if visible light were not the whole of the spectrum, it represented a large portion of it. They might suppose that even though there were signs that the atmosphere cut off the shorter wavelengths of the ultraviolet radiation and the longer wavelengths of the infrared radiation, there might be very little beyond the cutoff points.

The first real broadening of the optical horizon came by 1870, when the Scottish mathematician James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) worked out a complete theory of electricity and magnetism, one that still stands in full beauty today. He showed that the two phenomena were different aspects of a single "electromagnetic field." He also showed that periodic variations in such a field produced "electromagnetic radiations" of which light was one variety. By Maxwell's theory the radiations could come in any wavelength from far less than the observed ultraviolet to far more than the observed infrared. There was an enormously broad "electromagnetic spectrum" of which visible light made up only a very small part.

It was only theory at first, but soon enough Maxwell's suggestions came to be backed by firm evidence. In 1888 the German physicist Heinrich Rudolph Hertz (1857-1894) was able to produce, detect, and study electromagnetic radiation with wavelengths far higher than those of the infrared. These very long wavelengths studied by Hertz were originally referred to as "Hertzian waves" but eventually came to be known as "radio waves."

Then, in 1895 the German physicist Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen (1845-1923) discovered a form of radiation which he called "x-rays." These were definitely shown, in 1912, to be electromagnetic radiation with wavelengths much smaller than those of ultraviolet light by the German physicist Max Theodor Felix von Laue (1879-1960).

In 1896 the French physicist Antoine Henri Becquerel (1852-1908) discovered the phenomenon of "radioactivity," though he had no way of knowing at the time that this was caused by atoms of the heavy metal uranium giving off a constant emission of radiation and particles. In 1900 the French physicist Paul Ulrich Villard (1860-1934) demonstrated that part of this radiation was unaffected by a magnetic field and might therefore be a form of electromagnetic radiation. This was shown to be so and Rutherford called them "gamma rays." They had a wavelength even less than those of x-rays.

A span of electromagnetic radiation was therefore known, in the early decades of the twentieth century, reaching from gamma rays at the short-wavelength end through x-rays, ultraviolet radiation, visible light, infrared radiation to longer and longer radio waves. The whole covered dozens of octaves of which only *a single octave* is occupied by the entire spectrum of visible light.

In 1905 Einstein showed that all these forms of radiation traveled in wave packets which acted like particles in some ways and which he called "photons." Interpreting these in the light of a theory worked out by the German physicist Max Karl Ernst Ludwig Planck (1858-1947) in 1900, it could be demonstrated that the energy of the photons increased as the wavelength decreased. This meant that gamma rays were the most energetic form of electromagnetic radiation and that the energy decreased through x-rays, ultraviolet radiation, visible light, infrared radiation, and then finally the radio waves which are least energetic.

By modern concepts of the electromagnetic spectrum, the range of ultraviolet radiation from 400 to 300 nanometers, which is all the atmosphere will allow to pass, is only the "near ultraviolet." Beyond that is the "far ultraviolet" (300 to 200 nanometers) and the "extreme ultraviolet" (200 to 1 nanometers).

The x-rays lie beyond, with wavelengths of from 1 to 0.01 nanometers, while the gamma rays have wavelengths below 0.01 nanometers. (The boundary lines are manmade and arbitrary, of course, and what is convenient to consider the far ultraviolet at one time might be convenient to consider the near x-rays another.)

In the other direction lies the infrared radiation. The range from a wavelength of 700 to 2500 nanometers is the "near infrared." Since 1000 nanometers equals 1 micrometer, we might say that the near infrared range is from 0.7 to 2.5 micrometers. From 2.5 to 50 micrometers is the "intermediate infrared" and from 50 to 1000 micrometers is the "far infrared."

Beyond the infrared lies the radio-wave region with wavelengths of more than 1000 micrometers or, which is the same thing, with wavelengths of more than 1 millimeter.

The shortest radio waves are sometimes referred to as the "microwave" region, which extends from 1 to 500 millimeters (or from 0.1 to 50 centimeters). Beyond that are the still longer waves of the radio spectrum.

Radio Waves

ONE MIGHT SUPPOSE that the sun and the other stars in space would deliver radiation throughout the many octaves of the electromagnetic spectrum and that to be limited to the two and a half octaves of visible light and the immediately neighboring regions on either side was to limit the knowledge available to astronomers intolerably—but the thought did not seem to bother astronomers for more than half a century after Maxwell had advanced his theory.

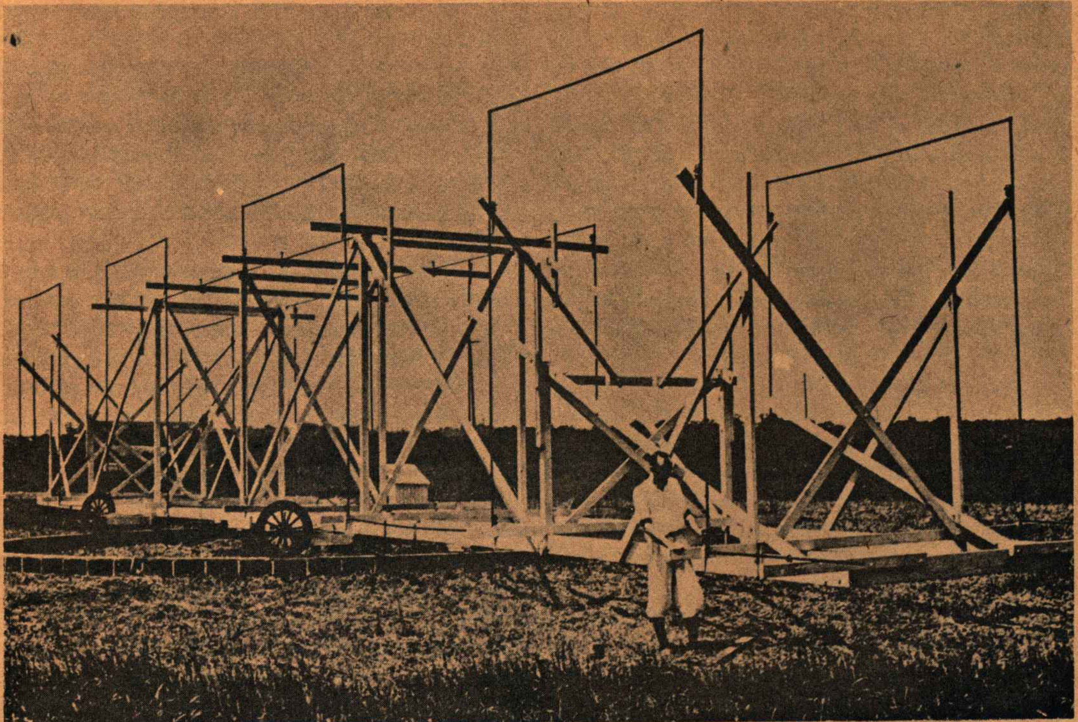
After all, the sun's peak radiation was in the visible-light region and it might be supposed that on either side of the visible spectrum the quantity of radiation fell off rapidly. The intensity of very-long-wave and very-short-wave radiation from the sky would probably be negligible and so, therefore, would be the information they could carry.

To be sure, some people did speculate about the possibility of radiation from objects in the sky that would lie far outside the usual bands of wavelength. Even then, the speculations dealt only with the sun, since that seemed the only object capable of bathing Earth in significant quantities of such radiation. The American inventor Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931) and the English physicist Oliver Joseph Lodge (1851-1940) both speculated on the possibility of radio waves from the sun. These speculations came about the turn of the century, but they were not followed up. For one thing, astronomers lacked the instruments to deal with radio waves.

Such instruments were being developed, however, though not in connection with astronomy.

When Hertz first produced radio waves, he did so by means of an alternating electric current surging first this way, then that, and leaping across a small air gap with each surge. The radio waves produced in this fashion could, in turn, produce an electric current in a wire that was held at a distance. These were the first "antennas," a term used for a wire or other structure used to send out or receive radio waves. It was by measuring the properties of the electric currents produced in antennas that one could determine the properties of the radio waves producing those currents.

The Italian electrical engineer Guglielmo Marconi (1874-1937) devised improved antennas for sending and receiving



Radio astronomy began when Karl Jansky of the Bell Telephone Laboratories used this apparatus in 1932 to show that radio waves were reaching the Earth from the center of our galaxy. The antenna "looked" in a horizontal direction only and scanned the celestial dome by combining the earth's motion with rotation of the antenna on its circular track. *Bell Telephone Laboratories*

beams of radio waves. Using them, he could send messages in pulses without the use of long, connecting wires ("wireless telegraphy") over increasing distances. On December 12, 1901, he succeeded in having radio-wave pulses sent from the southwestern tip of England and detected in Newfoundland. That date is usually considered the birth of "radio."

The Canadian-American physicist Reginald Aubrey Fessenden (1866-1932) devised a method for having the radio waves rise and fall in intensity ("amplitude modulation") in such a fashion as to mimic the rise and fall of sound waves. Sound could be converted into an electric current that varied with the sound-wave variation and this electric current was used to produce the properly modulated radio waves. The radio waves could then be reconverted first to a varying electric current and then to sound duplicating the original. Voice and music could thus be transmitted by radio, something Fessenden demonstrated for the first time in 1906.

The ability of radio messages to travel long distances over the curved face of the Earth was puzzling, inasmuch as radio waves traveled in a straight line and should therefore reach no further than the visible horizon, moving off into the upper atmosphere and outer space beyond that.

What apparently happened was that the radio waves were reflected by areas of the upper atmosphere that were rich in electrically charged atom fragments called "ions." In bouncing between Earth and these areas, they succeeded in traveling long distances about the planetary curve.

The existence of such a region of the upper atmosphere (the "ionosphere") was demonstrated in 1902 by the work of such men as the English physicist Oliver Heaviside (1850-1925) and the British-American electrical engineer Arthur Edwin Kennelly (1861-1939), plus the later work of the English physicist Edward Victor Appleton (1892-1965) in 1924.

The fact that radio waves originating on Earth's surface could be reflected by the ionosphere and kept near the surface meant that any radio waves reaching Earth from outer space would be reflected by the ionosphere and kept in outer space. This was another example of the way in which our atmosphere shielded us from radiation outside the visible light range.

However, the efficiency with which the ionosphere reflected radio waves decreased as the wavelength grew smaller. In fact, the microwave region immediately adjacent to the infrared band was too small in wavelength to be reflected at all and it was too long in wavelength to be absorbed by water vapor or carbon dioxide. This meant that any microwaves coming from any of the objects in space could pass through the ionosphere, survive the passage through the atmosphere, and reach Earth's surface.

There were, therefore, two "windows" through which electromagnetic radiation could reach Earth from the sky. One of them was the narrow and very familiar window through which visible light and immediately adjacent sections of ultraviolet and infrared radiations could reach us. The other was a considerably wider window through which microwaves could reach us. The "microwave window" extends from a wavelength of 0.5 centimeters to 3000 centimeters (30 meters), a stretch of over twelve octaves. There are also some narrow windows such as those we mentioned earlier in the infrared section.

The existence of the microwave window remained obscure because (as sometimes happens in science) it fell between two branches of knowledge.

The radio engineers, primarily concerned with the use of radio waves for communication on Earth, were not interested in those wavelengths that could penetrate the ionosphere. Such wavelengths were useless for their purposes and there was no point in working out methods for generating or receiving them. Astronomers, on the other hand, were not very much concerned with earthbound radio technology and were unaware of the behavior of microwaves. When, finally, radio engineering and astronomy met, it was entirely by accident.

It came about because Bell Telephone Laboratories was interested in radio waves. Telephone calls across oceans or from ships could be carried through to their destination by having them travel in part by way of radio waves ("radio telephony") and the Laboratories was interested in determining those factors that interfered with the radio waves introducing random noise, or "static." Electrical discharges, such as those accompanying thunderstorms, were one obvious source of interference, but there might be others.

Put in charge of the project was the American radio engineer Karl Guthe Jansky (1905-1950), who had joined Bell in 1928. Jansky built a series of large rectangles of wire which would serve as an "antenna array" that would receive radio waves from one particular direction much more efficiently than from any other. He mounted the whole on a merry-go-round arrangement so that it could be turned to receive radio waves from any direction and detect the directions of high-intensity reception.

In Holmdel, New Jersey, about 48 kilometers (30 miles) south of New York City, Jansky painstakingly tested the environment for interference. He was able to detect distant thunderstorms without trouble, as well as other obvious sources.

There was, however, always present a low and steady hissing sound, something that was quite different from the crackling of the sudden discharges of thunderstorms and that never vanished. By January 1932 Jansky's curiosity concerning this hissing sound reached the point where it became his major absorption.

He began checking different directions to see where, if anywhere, the hissing noise might be strongest. It seemed at first to be strongest in the direction of the sun and Jansky might well have concluded that, after all, as Edison and Lodge had suspected, the sun gave off radio waves as well as ordinary light waves, and that he was receiving a steady influx of these waves, weakened after traveling across 150 million kilometers and thus capable of producing only that low hiss. It would have been an important finding but not a really thundering one.

If the sun had been at or near the peak of the sunspot cycle, that might have been the answer. By a most fortunate stroke, however, Jansky was tracking down this mysterious phenomenon at a time when the sun was at minimum sunspot activity and was delivering comparatively little in the way of radio waves.

As Jansky checked his direction of radio-wave maximum day after day, he found it drifting away from the sun in a steady progression. He had learned enough astronomy in the course of his investigation to realize that the spot of radio-wave maximum was remaining constant relative to the stars and not to the sun. As a result, he discovered something that even the boldest speculators had not guessed—that radio waves from the stars might be arriving on Earth in sufficient concentration to be detected by something as crude as Jansky's antenna array.

The sound Jansky heard could now be called a "cosmic hiss" and it was coming from a spot in the Milky Way. It was, in fact, coming from the very spot Shapley had pinpointed as the center of the Galaxy only fourteen years before. Jansky reported his findings in the December 1932 issue of the *Proceedings of the Institute of Radio Engineers* and that represents the moment of birth of what is now called "radio astronomy." Jansky's crude device might as well be considered the first "radio telescope."

Yet Jansky's revolutionary discovery of galactic radio noise was not followed up by professional astronomers. They were caught up in the revolutionary findings of the Hooker reflectors and in the plans for other large optical telescopes and shrugged off the microwave finding.

But neither was Jansky's finding entirely ignored. The notion of radio messages from the stars caught the popular fancy, and the newspapers made a fuss over it. The noise was even amplified and sent out over Earthly radios so that people could hear the stellar broadcast. At least one first-rank astronomer, Fred Lawrence Whipple, considered the nature of the radio signals and speculated seriously on them.

Through the lean years that followed Jansky's finding, one *amateur* astronomer carried the load of radio astronomy all by himself. This was the American radio engineer Grote Reber.

Fascinated by the reports of Jansky's work, Reber decided to build a better receiver. He recognized the fact that the radio waves from outer space would be in excessively small quantities and he realized that he would surely need a larger and more elaborate antenna array to receive the weak radiations in any detail beyond the bland and steady hiss that Jansky had received.

As an alternative, he might use a relatively simple antenna but gather radio waves over a large area and focus them on that antenna, similar to the system used in optical telescopes dealing with light waves. Reber moved in that direction and decided to build a paraboloid "dish" for the purpose, something that would be the analogue of the great mirrors of the reflecting telescopes.

It was a great project to be undertaken by an amateur, without help, and in a field in which there were no precedents to follow, but Reber had some advantages working in his favor.

The precision with which a reflecting device need be made paraboloid declines with increasing wavelength. Whereas an optical mirror must be polished and polished to a perfect curve within a millionth of an inch or so, a paraboloid radio receiver, dealing with waves a million times as long as light waves, could vary from the ideal by an inch or so without harm.

Then, too, microwaves are far less affected by atmospheric turbulence and temperature differences than light waves are. Nor are there as many microwave sources in the Earthly environment as there are light sources. For these reasons, the paraboloid reflector need not be enclosed in a tube. The dish could be left bare and that was a great simplification in construction.

It was quite possible, then, for Reber to build a useful paraboloid reflector 9 meters (31 feet) in diameter in his backyard in Wheaton, Illinois, about 65 kilometers (40 miles) west of Chicago. It was only partially mobile. It pointed straight up and could be turned north and south, but not east and west, so that it could detect a radio-wave-radiating object in the sky only as it crossed the north-south meridian passing through the zenith.

On the other hand, microwaves pierce clouds, fog, and mist as light waves do not. Moreover, the sun does not produce microwaves in such quantity as to blank out all else when it is in the sky as it does light. As a result, Reber could use his dish day and night and in all weather. (Reber's dish was the first radio telescope that looked vaguely like an optical one—at least like a telescope mirror.)

There is a serious disadvantage involving the matter of "resolution" in radio astronomy. Resolution involves the exact location of a radiating source in the sky and the ability to distinguish between two closely placed radiation sources, seeing them as two and not as one. The ability to achieve a particular resolution with a receiving instrument of a particular device becomes worse as the wavelength of the radiation being received becomes longer.

Jansky had, for instance, detected radio waves with a wavelength of 15 meters. This is some 30 million times as long as the wavelengths of visible light. At such a radio wavelength, to achieve the same resolution as the human eye could, using visible light, would require a dish receiving radio waves that was 100 kilometers (60 miles) across.

Reber judged, quite correctly, that Jansky, who hadn't been looking for radio waves from space, had not designed his instrument to receive the wavelengths that arrived from space in greatest concentration. Reber felt that the proper wavelengths to look for were considerably shorter than those Jansky detected. He himself concentrated on receiving wavelengths down to as little as 60 centimeters, only one twenty-fifth the length of the waves Jansky had received.

This, combined with the paraboloid shape of his receiver, meant that Reber could expect to detect much fainter sources of radio waves than Jansky could and with far better resolution. Since even the 60-centimeter waves were still a million times longer than visible light waves, that "far better" resolution still wasn't much. Reber's 9-meter (31-foot) reflector fell far short of the kind of resolution the unaided eye could handle using visible light. Two radio sources, separated by less than 12° (twenty-four times the width of the full moon), were picked up as a single source by Reber's dish. He could see the "radio sky" much as someone looking through frosted glass could see the visible sky.

But it was enough; it was a beginning. Reber began to make observations at the start of 1938, experimenting with a variety of receivers and detectors placed at the focus of his paraboloid. In April 1939 he finally began to detect radio waves from cosmic sources.

All along the course of the Milky Way, he detected rises in radio-wave concentration. He found "radio sources" in Cassiopeia, Cygnus, and Taurus but could not attribute them to any particular object. Resolution was too poor.

Painstakingly, though, doing what he could with what he had, Reber prepared the first "radio map" of the sky, using a wavelength of 190 centimeters for the purpose. It was a map that was not to be bettered for fifteen years.

Reber published his results in 1940 and in 1942, and they were noted, but nothing could be done about it then. World War II was on and the attention of scientists was elsewhere.

Radar

ALTHOUGH no systematic work, other than Reber's, was done on radio astronomy during World War II, the conflict had a positive effect on the new field. It was through the needs of that war that microwaves came into important use here on Earth for the first time.

We see by detecting light waves reflected from the objects we are looking at. Light waves are ideal for the purpose because they move so quickly that in the time it takes them to strike an object and be reflected to our eyes, that object has no time to change position perceptibly. Light waves travel in straight lines, generally, so that the object is, in fact, where it seems to be. (There are cases where light waves curve in passing through atmospheric layers at different temperatures and we then see "mirages," that is, apparent objects that are not where we think we see them.) Finally, light waves are so tiny that they make it possible to see things with great resolution, even down to the level of bacteria (if we make use of a microscope).

The great disadvantage of light is that it will not penetrate clouds, mist, or fog. Then, too, in the absence of the sun, at night, light is not present in any great quantity. We can supply artificial light for ourselves at night, but that is usually only of local value.

If we make use of electromagnetic radiation sufficiently longer than those of visible light, it becomes possible to penetrate clouds, mist, and fog without trouble. However, resolution declines as the wavelength increases. In addition, the longer the waves, the greater their tendency to bend around objects of ordinary size, so that they no longer can be considered as necessarily moving in a straight line—nor will they be reflected by the objects they move around.

The thing to do is to choose those wavelengths that are barely long enough to penetrate the clouds yet short enough to give sufficiently good resolution to detect objects of reasonable size. Microwaves, for instance, might be produced in narrow beams to penetrate night, clouds, or fog and bounce off distant airplanes, for instance.

This was an important matter in the 1930s when it seemed that war might come, a war in which the airplane would be a crucial weapon. The United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany all worked on devices for handling microwaves in such a way that an incoming wave of bomber planes might be detected as long as possible before they actually arrived.

Each nation achieved a measure of success in this. In the United States the technique was referred to as "radio detection and ranging." The "radio" refers to the fact that microwaves can be considered ultrashort radio waves. By "ranging" is meant the determination of distance, something that can be obtained from the length of time it takes a beam of microwaves (traveling at the known speed of light) to go from the transmitter to the object being detected and then, after reflection, back to the receiver. Eventually, the expression was reduced to its initial letters and became "radar" and it is by that name that the technique is now universally known.

Of the nations involved in radar research, Great Britain made the most significant advances. The Scottish physicist Robert Watson-Watt patented devices that made it possible to follow a moving airplane by means of radar as early as 1935.

What was needed, however, was the production of a strong pulse of microwaves so that comparatively distant, small, or fast-moving objects could still reflect enough for easy detection. In visible-light terms, what was needed was a searchlight strong enough to illuminate the terrain.

In early 1940 scientists at the University of Birmingham in Great Britain worked out a device in which magnetic and electric fields could manipulate speeding electrons in such a fashion as to transfer energy from those electrons to radiation. The size of the device was chosen so as to make sure that the wavelengths of the radiation were in the microwave range.

This device, called a "magnetron," made it possible, for the first time, to send out powerful beams of microwaves. It was the microwave searchlight needed to illuminate the sky and show the moving planes in it.

The invention of the magnetron came just in time, with a few paltry months to spare, to save Great Britain and, perhaps, the whole free world, from the assault of Hitler. In September 1940 the full fury of the German air force fell upon London. Hitler, unaware of the new efficiency of radar, preferred to attack the city rather than the radar stations.

While one cannot discount the heroic fight of the outnumbered Royal Air Force of Great Britain (concerning whom Churchill said, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few"), the fact remains that without radar pinpointing the precess of the German planes, the R.A.F. would not have been victorious.

As it happened, the efforts of the British scientists to protect their nation against enemy assault meant the development of just those devices that would serve to receive, with the utmost delicacy, those wavelengths that were reaching men not only from man's own magnetrons but from cosmic sources many light-years away. The lack of instruments, a lack that had made radio astronomy impractical before World War II, was corrected, and after World War II, it was another story.

Indeed, even during World War II, there

were accidental discoveries in radio astronomy. In February 1942 the British found their radar being interfered with. They were receiving microwaves at times when there were no planes in the sky to account for echoes, and they viewed this with great seriousness. If the Germans had discovered methods of jamming the radar reception, enemy planes could come in under cover of a crowd of microwaves from everywhere so that the British could not tell the real thing from the false.

The British assigned J. Stanley Hey to determine the source of the interference and, as it turned out, it wasn't hard. Now that devices had been developed for detecting tiny quantities of microwaves arriving from particular directions (essential to radar) it was easy to note that the interfering microwaves were coming from the sun. This was the first time that microwaves from any specific visible object in space were detected, so that the sun became the first definite radio source.

Hey did not publish this finding till after the war because of the natural tendency to consider everything secret that was even vaguely concerned with military matters. A few months later, in June 1942, the American physicist George Clark Southworth used radar equipment in a deliberate attempt to detect radio waves from the sun and succeeded. His results were kept secret, too.

In September 1943, however, Grote Reber discovered radio waves from the sun and since he had nothing to do with the military, it never occurred to him to suppress the information. So much for secrecy.

Hey's discovery meant more than merely finding microwaves issuing from the sun. That could easily have been anticipated. What he found was that the microwaves were apparently associated with a huge solar flare, and here an important difference showed up between solar light waves and solar microwaves.

The light waves originating from the sun did so as a result of the overwhelming energies generated in the solar interior. Some processes increased or decreased the light-wave production locally, but these effects were so small in comparison with the total light-energy radiated by the sun that there was only the smallest overall effect. In general, the sun delivers light energy at a constant rate, has done so, presumably, over a period of billions of years in the past and will continue to do so, in all likelihood, over another period of billions of years into the future.

The microwave energy delivered by the sun is tiny in comparison to the light energy but is associated with visible disturbances on the surface of the sun and varies by substantial amounts. By concentrating on this part of the electromagnetic spectrum, comparatively small events on the sun (in terms of visible light) stand out in sharp relief. The association of microwave bursts with flares was thus the first clear indication that the study of microwaves might yield information difficult to obtain in the optical range.

The Planetary Echoes

AS SOON AS World War II was over, it became possible to use the newly developed radar techniques for astronomical purposes. The same microwaves that could be produced, bounced off airplanes, and detected on their return might be used to detect objects in space. Man could reach out to touch the heavenly bodies, with a beam of radiation at least, if not with anything corporeal.

In 1945 Hey found, for instance, that microwave beams could be reflected from meteors. Passing meteors left a wake of ions which would reflect the microwaves as though it were a wire in the sky. Hey used three microwave beams situated miles apart, so that from the timing of the different echo returns, the position of the meteor trails could be determined. The most interesting part of this observation was that, for the first time in the history of astronomy, meteor trails could be detected as easily by day as by night.

Meteor trails, however, are to be observed in Earth's atmosphere and these are not, strictly speaking, astronomical objects. The birth of "radar astronomy" really came in 1946 when a Hungarian physicist, Zoltan Lajos Bay, sent out a beam of microwaves to the moon and detected the return echo. Almost simultaneously, and independently, two Americans working for the U.S. Army Signal Corps did the same with more powerful equipment, obtaining more clear-cut echos.

The microwave echoes brought with them several kinds of information. From the time lapse between the emission of the original beam and the detection of the echo, one could determine the distance of the moon. From the manner in which the wavelength of the echo was lengthened or shortened, one could tell whether the part of the moon struck was receding from us or approaching us—and from this one could work out the rate of rotation of the moon.

Then, too, if the moon were perfectly smooth, the beam would be returned unscattered and would be returned in our direction only from the center of the visible face. From the fact that the beam is scattered and that certain quantities are sent back in our direction from off-center positions, estimates could be made as to the general roughness of the lunar surface.

In the case of the moon, none of this is very important. The moon is close enough so that optical studies can be made in great detail and we don't have to rely on microwave echoes. Nevertheless, the techniques developed by touching the moon with microwaves could be used for other more distant targets with greater effect. Then, too, the public was interested by this glamorous achievement of bouncing microwaves off the moon, and that made it easier to gain support for more difficult tasks of a similar nature.

The more distant a body is, the fainter the echo, and the faintness is strongly dependent on distance. If object B is twice as far as object A, the echo from B is only one-sixteenth as strong as that from A, all things being equal.

Then, too, the smaller the body the fainter the echo, but distance is usually more important than size in this respect. The sun, which is by far the largest body in the solar system, and which is large enough to present the same apparent size of target as the moon, is so distant (400 times the distance of the moon) that microwave echoes from its surface are received at less than a hundred-thousandth the intensity of those of the moon.

Nevertheless, radio astronomers* perfected their techniques until the time came when they could detect microwave echoes carrying as little power as a thousandth of a millionth of a millionth of a millionth of a watt, and measure the time lapse of return with an accuracy of a millionth of 1 percent.

It was not till 1959, thirteen years after the first moon echoes were received, that the sun was successfully used as a microwave target. A team of workers at Stanford University under the astronomer Von Russell Eshleman managed to receive the echoes.

Aside from the accomplishment of the task, little was gained, since the sun's own microwave emissions confused matters and limited the information to be obtained from the echo. It was rather like trying to investigate the nature of a fire by shining the light of a flashlight upon it.

The next most logical target was Venus which, except for the moon, is the nearest sizable object to the Earth. At its closest, Venus is only 100 times as far from us as the moon is, and only a quarter as far as the sun is. It is, of course, much smaller than the sun and microwave echoes from Venus would reasonably be expected to be only about a fiftieth as strong as those from the sun.

Venus became the target for numerous radar astronomers and in the year 1961 no fewer than five teams (three in the United States, one in Great Britain, and one in the Soviet Union) all reported success. The best results were obtained by the Millstone Radar Observatory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The microwave echoes from Venus were the first to supply significant new information that could not have been obtained otherwise at the time. For one thing, the distance of Venus could be determined with high accuracy in this way—with higher accuracy, in fact, than could be determined by parallax methods using optical telescopes.

The most accurate earlier measurement of the distances of the solar system had

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*Although most of the work has been done with microwaves, the force of Jansky's original discovery with what were considered radio waves causes us to speak of *radio* astronomy. Since microwaves can be considered part of the radio region of the electromagnetic spectrum, this is not a serious misnomer.

come in 1931 at the time of a particularly close approach of the asteroid Eros. It came within 25 million kilometers (16 million miles) of the earth, a distance less than that of any larger body. This made its parallax particularly large and easy to measure. Because Eros was so small as to be no more than a dot of light, even in telescopes, changes in its position were more easily measured than would have been the case if it were a globe covering a perceptible area of the field of vision, as the planets were.

A long detailed program was set up to observe Eros. Fourteen observatories in nine countries took part. Seven months were spent on the project and nearly 3000 photographs were taken. The position of Eros was determined on each one of them, and then there followed ten years of calculations supervised by the English astronomer Harold Spencer-Jones (1890-1960). From the parallax of Eros, its distance at a particular time could be calculated and from that the distance of every other planetary body at any particular time. Most fundamentally, the average distance of the sun from the Earth (the "astronomical unit") could be determined. As a result of the microwave echoes from Venus, however, the dimensions of the solar system, including the astronomical unit, could be determined at once with an accuracy outweighing the major effort of a quarter century earlier.

In this way, radio astronomy, even in its infancy, showed that it could outdo, at a stroke, an optical achievement built up after three centuries of refinement.

The microwave reflection could do more.

Venus is covered by an unbroken and optically impenetrable layer of clouds covering its entire surface. For this reason, the image of the planet, which has been studied by telescope since Galileo's time, is absolutely featureless and yields us almost no information. Even in the early 1960s, less was known of Venus than of distant Neptune.

Microwave echoes have changed that. To microwaves, Venus's cloud layer is no obstacle. In 1965 microwave echoes, bouncing in scattered fashion from the hidden solid surface of the planet, yielded data indicating the presence of mountain ranges. We can now produce very rough radar maps of Venus.

In 1962 moreover, microwave echoes from Venus could be analyzed with sufficient delicacy (by Richard M. Goldstein and Roland L. Carpenter in Goldstone Lake, California) to yield information on the planet's rotation.

Until then it had been suspected that Venus's rotation had been slowed by the sun's gravitational effect until the planet rotated in the same time as it revolved about the sun. (This follows the behavior of the moon, which rotates in the same time it revolves about the Earth.) If Venus is in a gravitational lock, its period of rotation is 225 days, which is the length of its year.

The 1962 studies, however, showed Venus's rotation period to be longer than its year and later and more refined studies showed the period to be 243.1 days. What's more, its rotation was retrograde. Instead of rotating from west to east as Earth and Mars do, it rotates from east to west. Another way of looking at it is to say that Venus's axis had tipped upside-down so that its north pole is roughly where Earth's south pole would be and vice versa.

This is an example of radio astronomy not merely improving on optical astronomy but achieving something that was impossible for optical astronomy at the time, and, in doing so, arriving at a completely unexpected result.

A result, equally startling, was obtained in connection with the planet Mercury. It is smaller than Venus and is farther from us so that obtaining microwave echoes from Mercury requires the ability to detect radiation a hundredth as strong as that to be expected from Venus. Nevertheless, it was in June 1962 that a team of Soviet scientists succeeded in detecting a microwave echo from Mercury.

By 1965 Gordon H. Pettengill and Rolf B. Dyce, working at Arecibo, Puerto Rico, could analyze echoes from Mercury with enough delicacy to calculate its period of rotation.

Mercury does not have a cloud layer as Venus does. In fact, Mercury has virtually no atmosphere and one sees its bare solid surface as in the case of the moon. It is so distant and so close to the sun, usually, that the word "sees" must be taken with some reservation. In 1889, however, Schiaparelli had studied what surface markings he could make out and had decided that the planet rotated on its axis in eighty-eight days. This is the same as its period of revolution about the sun and that was accepted as natural in view of the sun's tidal effect upon the small planet.

The microwave echoes, however, showed that the rotational period, which had been accepted as eighty-eight days without question for eighty years, was actually just under fifty-nine days. As it turned out, this was just two thirds of its period of revolution around the sun and this, too, could be explained by tidal effects.

In the case of Venus, there is no way of checking the radar-reflecting finding optically, but one can at least try in the case of Mercury. With the new data driving them, astronomers studied Mercury carefully and found that optical observations did indeed support the new figure.

Radar echoes have also been obtained from Mars and from Jupiter. Richard Goldstein has detected echoes from nearby asteroids and from distant Saturn (the most distant target yet achieved). Curiously, Saturn's rings reflect microwaves with astonishing efficiency, reflecting about 60 percent of what a silver sphere would reflect. This compares with the corresponding figures of 8 percent for Mars, 5 percent for the moon, and 1.5 percent for Venus. **END**

LAST WORDS

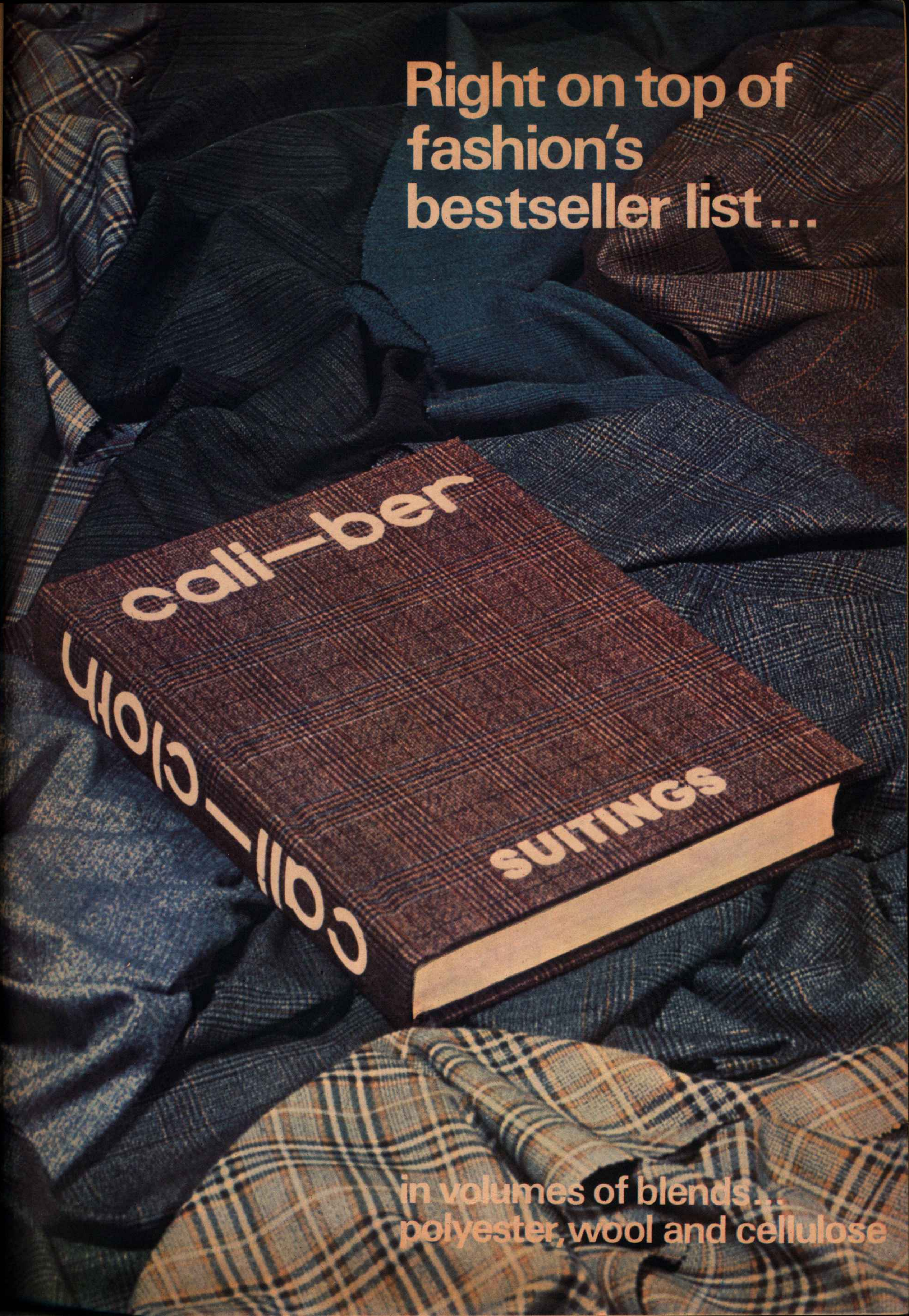
Observing Ananda weeping, Gautama said, "O Ananda, do not weep. This body of ours contains within itself the powers which renews its strength for a time, but also the causes which lead to its destruction. Is there anything put together which shall not dissolve?"

Then, turning to his disciples, he said, "When I am passed away and am no longer with you, do not think the Buddha has left you, and is not still in your midst. You have my words, my explanations, my laws. . . ." And again, "Beloved disciples, if you love my memory, love one another."

And after another pause he said, "Beloved, that which causes life causes also decay and death. Never forget this. I called you to tell you this."

These were the last words of Gautama Buddha, as he stretched himself out and died under the great sal tree, at Kasinagara.

–Ruskin Bond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THE JUDICIARY DURING THE EMERGENCY

By A. G. Noorani

THE PERFORMANCE of the Indian judiciary during the nineteen months of repression miscalled the Emergency should be objectively evaluated like those of other institutions. It exposes, at once, the strengths and the weaknesses in our Constitution and in our judicial system and underlines the close link between public opinion and judicial independence. The framers of the Constitution did, indeed, provide for the Proclamation of Emergency on the ground of "internal disturbance", and for the suspension of the fundamental rights comprised in Article 19 which constitute the civil liberties of the citizen such as freedom of speech and expression, the rights to assemble peacefully and to form associations. The Constitution also empowered the President by Order to suspend other fundamental rights.

But did they conceive that if these powers are grossly abused the judiciary should be powerless? Or that the Constitution, far from protecting the citizen, should render his position far worse in an Emergency vis a vis executive power than what it was during British rule?

They were well aware of the excellent record of Indian courts during the Quit India movement barring a very few lapses and at a time when a fierce war waging not far from the country's frontiers. The documents published recently by the British Government show how in sheer desperation the Viceroy begged of the Secretary of State to send a K.C. to brainwash Sir Maurice Gwyer, the Chief Justice of the Federal Court and Sir Harold Derybshire, the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. *The Hindustan Times* published a collection of judgments of political interest delivered then by Indian courts entitled "Recent Judgments in India" with a Foreword by Dr. K. N. Katju in which he wrote in high praise of the judgments of the Federal Court.

What was the record, in comparison, of the Indian courts during the emergency imposed by an Indian Government? The most remarkable feature of the first few weeks was the citizen's hesitation, if not reluctance, to approach the courts. It was some days before the censor's orders were challenged and the petitions, for some reason or the other, took a long time to be disposed off, which is a pity.

The first major success for the citizen was in Mrs. Bharati Nayar vs. Union of India and others. It was decided by the Delhi High Court on September 15, 1975. The detenu, Mr. Kuldip Nayar, had been released three days earlier. Mr. Justice S. Rangarajan with Mr. Justice R. N. Aggarwal concurring, nonetheless, delivered judgment on his wife's habeas corpus petition and discussed the circumstances in which the writ was available even during the Emergency. It was a most able judgment besides being a courageous one for which both the judges paid a heavy price later.

So did Mr. Justice U. R. Lalit of the Bombay High Court. On October 6, 1975 he delivered judgment on bail applications by two fifteen year olds who had been caught by the police distributing leaflets containing criticisms of the Emergency. Under the Defence of India Rules none accused of any offence under the Rules could be granted bail unless the Court "is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that he is not guilty of such contravention". The Judge had no choice but to go into the merits which he did and ruled that "the criticism is within the limits permissible in a democratic system of life" and the accused were not guilty. He ordered their release on bail. They had already been in Remand Home for over six weeks.

This judgment was cited in many a magistrate's court where similar cases came up for trial. It was the first case in which the citizen's right to criticise the regime was upheld.

In the Supreme Court Mrs. Indira Gandhi's appeal against the Allahabad High Court Judgment took an unexpected turn. The Law Minister Mr. H. R. Gokhale had pushed through Parliament the Constitution 39th Amendment Act to enable Parliament by law to provide for a special forum to try petitions contesting the election of the President, the Vice-President, the Speaker–and the Prime Minister. No such forum was in fact provided for to try Mr. Raj Narain's petition or Mrs. Gandhi's appeal. All the same a provision in the Amendment nullified the Allahabad judgment and the election law. This provision (Art. 329A (4)) was struck down as invalid by the Supreme Court on November 7, 1975, on the ground that the Constitution cannot be amended so as to alter its "basic structure", as laid down in the famous Keshavananda Bharati's case in 1973. The Court ruled that the offending provision was arbitrary and violative of the rule of law. However, since the election law itself was amended retrospectively in favour of Mrs. Gandhi on the points she had lost, her appeal was allowed without going into the evidence on those points. Only one judge did so, Mr. Justice M. H. Beg. It was a fine triumph for Mr. Shanti Bhushan, counsel for Mr. Raj Narain. He had succeeded handsomely on the constitutional question which was of major importance. Mrs. Gandhi's appeal was allowed because she had changed the law. It was a moral defeat for her, in truth. The Bar resented Mr. Justice Beg's judgment and, more so, the aspersions he chose to cast on Mr. Raj Narain and Mr. Shanti Bhushan when they applied for the expunction of his remarks on the evidence.

A FEW DAYS after the judgment was delivered, a determined effort was made to obtain a review and rejection of the "basic structure" doctrine by a full Bench of the Court. The effort did not succeed so able and effective was Mr. N. A. Palkhivala's opposition to it. The Bench was dissolved on November 12, 1975 after three days' argument.

Meanwhile, the High Courts went ahead and delivered judgments worthy of their fine tradition. In Mr. N. P. Nathwani's case on the right to hold an indoor meeting restricted to lawyers to discuss civil liberties and the rule of law, Chief Justice Kantawala and Mr. Justice Tulzapurkar of the Bombay High Court, on December 18, 1975, upheld the right to meet and discuss the subject.

In the course of his concurring judgment Justice Tulzapurkar observed:

"Even during the Emergencies that are currently in operation it is legitimate for any citizen to say that the proclamations of Emergency, which are legislative acts on the part of the President are unjustified or unwarranted, it is legitimate for any citizen to say that these Emergencies are being kept alive for suppressing democratic dissent and criticism and that these should be ended, it is legitimate for any citizen to say that the Presidential Order dated 27th June, 1975, which in its blanket form purports to take away the remedy by way of habeas corpus to challenge his detention, even if it is made malafide, be revoked, and it is further legitimate for any citizen to say that Parliament should meet to disapprove the two Proclamations and the Presidential Order dated 27th June, 1975. Of course all these things could be said by any citizen subject to one proviso that the manner in which all this is said by him does not constitute a 'prejudicial act' as defined in Rule 36(e) of Defence and Internal Security of India Rules, 1971 which according to the settled law of this country means that while saying all these things there should be no incitement to violence. *In other words, creation of public opinion against the Emergency in a persuasive, peaceful and constructive manner is permissible* *and perfectly legal."* (emphasis mine)

On February 10, 1976, another Division Bench of the Court consisting, of Mr. Justice D. P. Madon and Mr. Justice M. H. Kania, delivered judgment in Mr. M. R. Masani's case against the censor's cuts. Once again, the right of dissent was reaffirmed. The Court said "There is another important factor which the Censor must also bear in mind. The Press is not only an instrument of disseminating information but it is also a powerful medium of moulding public opinion by propaganda. True democracy can only thrive in a free clearing house of competing ideologies and philosophies–political, economic and social–and in this the Press has an important role to play. The day this clearing house closes down would toll the death-knell of democracy. It is not the function of the Censor acting under the Censorship Order to make all newspapers and periodicals trim their sails to one wind or to tow along in a single file or to speak in chorus with one voice. It is not for him to exercise his statutory powers to force public opinion in a single mould or to turn the Press into an instrument for brainwashing the public. Under the Censorship Order the Censor is appointed the nursemaid of democracy and not its grave-digger. Dissent from the opinions and views held by the majority and criticism and disapproval of measures initiated by a party in power make for a healthy political climate, and it is not for the Censor to inject into this the lifelessness of forced conformity. Merely because dissent, disapproval or criticism is expressed in strong language is no ground for banning its publication".

The following month, Mr. Justice J. B. Mehta and Mr. Justice S. H. Sheth of the Gujarat High Court delivered judgment in the case of "Bhumiputra", a Sarvodaya periodical. In striking down the censor's orders the Court made some scathing observations. "There cannot be a more Draconian assault on a people in a democracy than one which is disclosed by the guidelines issued by the Chief Censor", they remarked.

THE JUDICIARY had asserted itself. There was no question about it. The people's hopes soared. The censor, however, did his best to see that the decisions adverse to the Government did not become known. Neither Mrs. Bharati Nayar's victory nor her husband Kuldip's release could be published in the Indian newspapers. The Bombay High Court and the Gujarat High Court criticised censorship of judicial proceedings but it was of little avail. Journals like "Opinion", "Janata", and "Evening View" published by P. L. Lakhanpal did as much as they could to enlighten their readers about what was going on in the courts.

The Bombay, Karnataka and Delhi High Courts granted to detenus reliefs short of release from jail by giving directions to the detaining authorities for various amenities and facilities to detenus not only in matters such as supply of food from outside at their own expense, but to be allowed to sit for examinations and to vote at the mayoral election or elections to statutory committees of local bodies. In the case of Mr. L. K. Advani the Karnataka High Court ordered in April 1976 that he be taken to Delhi to take his oath as a newly elected member of the Rajya Sabha and then brought back to Bangalore.

The example of the High Courts encouraged the courts below. The Judicial Magistrate in the Tis Hazari Court in Delhi threw out the case against Mr. H. V. Kamath and six others, who had been arrested on October 2, 1975 at the prayer meeting in the Gandhi Samadhi grounds, on the charge of shouting objectionable slogans. Mr. B. L. Goel, Sessions Judge, Saharanpur, ruled that criticism of the Prime Minister and the other Ministers was no offence in law. He held that the slogan *"Indira Shahi nahi chalengi"* (Indira's rule will not prevail) was unexceptionable in law.

While all this was encouraging the legal community waited with bated breath for the results of the proceedings in the habeas corpus case which was being argued at length in the Supreme Court in February. The Court reserved judgment and delivered it on April 28, 1976 to a shocked nation.

The Court was interpreting the President's Order of June 27, 1975, under Art. 359 of the Constitution, suspending for the duration of the Emergency the right to move any court for the enforcement of the fundamental rights to equality before the law (Art. 14) to personal liberty (Art. 21), and to protection against arbitrary arrest and detention (Art. 22). By a majority 4 to 1, the Court ruled that in view of this Order no person can move a High Court for a writ of habeas corpus to challenge the legality of an order of detention "on the ground that it is not under or in compliance with the Act (MISA) or is illegal or is vitiated by mala fides or is based on extraneous considerations". In other words, let alone enforce the fundamental rights, a citizen may not question the sheer legality of the detention order or its bona fides. The judges who constituted the majority were Chief Justice A. N. Ray and, M. H. Beg, Y. V. Chandrachud and P. N. Bhagwati JJ. In his powerful dissent Mr. Justice Khanna pointed out that even in the absence of the fundamental right to personal liberty the State has no power to deprive a person of his life or liberty without the authority of the law. "This is the essential postulate and basic assumption of the rule of law in every civilised society". The Indian had this right under British rule. The majority judgments' interpretation of the Constitution denied it to him.

"The Supreme Court's judgment on the Habeas Corpus question has put out the last flickering candle of individual freedom. Mrs. Gandhi's dictatorship, both in its personalised and institutionalised forms, is now almost complete," Jayaprakash Narayan said on May 15, 1976. Mr. M. C. Chagla characterised the decision as "the worst in the history of the Supreme Court". Mr. V. M. Tarkunde, a former Judge of the Bombay High Court and a leading member of the Supreme Court Bar characterised it as "Judicial Suicide". He wrote "The Supreme Court decision in the habeas corpus case, apart from being legally unsound, is fraught with the greatest harm to our people and our country. It makes a mockery of the very concept of justice. It is essential that the decision should not be allowed for long to tarnish the fair name and commendable record of the highest tribunal in the country."

Unsound as was the majority ruling, far more disturbing were the observations which the judges made.

MR. JUSTICE BEG said "I do not think that it is either responsible advocacy or the performance of any patriotic or public duty to suggest that powers of preventive detention are being misused in the current Emergency when our attention could not be drawn to the allegations in a single case even by way of illustration of the alleged misuse. In fact, I asked some learned Counsel to indicate the alleged facts of any particular case before us to enable us to appreciate how the power of preventive detention had been misused. Mostly, the answers given were that the facts of the cases were not before us at this stage which is true. But, it is significant that no case of alleged 'malice in fact' could be even brought to our notice.

"It seems to me that courts can safely act on the presumption that powers of preventive detention are not being abused. The theory that preventive detention serves a psycho-therapeutic purpose may not be correct. But, the constitutional duty of every Government faced with threats of widespread disorder and chaos to meet it with appropriate steps cannot be denied. And, if one can refer to a matter of common knowledge, appearing from newspaper reports, a number of detenus arrested last year have already been released. This shows that the whole situation is periodically reviewed. Furthermore, we understand that the care and concern bestowed by the State authorities upon the welfare of detenus who are well-housed, well-fed, and well-treated, is almost maternal. Even parents have to take appropriate preventive action against those children who may threaten to burn down the house they live in." His statements were factually as wrong as his comments on counsel were unjustified. The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court had commented on the "indiscriminate" use of powers under MISA to refuse to punish grounds to detenus. Mr. P. T. Sanghvi's petition in Mrs. Mrinal Gore's case pointing out the unbearable prison conditions had been mentioned to the Court during the hearing. Mr. Justice Beg's certificate of "maternal" treatment to detenus was uncalled for, and unwarranted.

Lord Atkin has earned the undying respect of those who value the rule of law for his masterly dissent in the famous case of preventive detention, *Livesidege vs. Anderson,* in the House of Lords and particularly for his remark "Amid the clash of arms, the laws are not silent. They may be changed, but they speak the same language in war as in peace. It has always been one of the pillars of freedom, one of the principles of liberty for which on recent authority we are fighting, that the judges are no respectors of persons and stand between the subject and any attempted encroachments on his liberty by the executive; alert to see that any coercive action is justified in law". This premise and the outlook it expressed were accepted by Indian judges.

Mr. Justice Y. V. Chandrachud expressed the opposite view in circumstances less grave than a war and by a paraphrase of Lord Atkin's own words: "Amidst the clash of arms and conflict of ideologies, laws will not be silent but in times when the nation is believed to be going through great strains and stresses, it may be necessary to entrust sweeping powers to the State. And it is no small comfort that those powers are granted with the consent of the Parliament. The people of this country are entitled to expect when they go to the ballot-box that their chosen representatives will not willingly suffer an erosion of the rights of the people. And the Parliament, while arming the Executive with great and vast powers of Government, may feel fairly certain that such powers will be reasonably exercised. The periodical reviews of detention orders, the checks and counterchecks which the law provides and above all the lofty faith in democracy which ushered the birth of the nation will, I hope, eliminate all fear that great powers are capable of the greatest abuse. Ultimately, the object of depriving a few of their liberty for a temporary period has to be to give to many the perennial fruits of freedom".

Mr. Justice Chandrachud concluded: "Counsel after counsel expressed the fear that during the emergency, the Executive may whip and strip and starve the detenu and if this be our judgment, even shoot him down. Such misdeeds have not tarnished the record of Free India and I have a diamond bright, diamond-hard hope that such things will never come to pass". They did. As a direct result of the Court's ruling, Rajan and many others like him could have had no redress from the courts while they were being tortured in jails before being done to death.

Mr. Justice Bhagwati said "I do not think it would be right for me to allow my love of personal liberty to cloud my vision or to persuade me to place on the relevant provision of the Constitution a construction which its language cannot reasonably bear''. One of his brother Judges, Mr. Justice Khanna, and as many as six High Courts–Allahabad, Bombay, Delhi, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan–accepted as reasonable that very construction and so did the entire legal community.

There was some hope that the writ of habeas corpus would, nonetheless, be available if not to secure release from imprisonment at least for those minimal conditions of detention to which a political prisoner is entitled if he is not to be treated as a convicted criminal. The Court's judgment delivered on January 25, 1977 extinguished the hope. Mr. Justice Beg's concurring judgment wiped out any distinction between preventive detention and imprisonment for crime. In his view "the exercise of power of preventive detention during an Emergency may be viewed as a purely administrative, or, to use the term employed by Sir William Hodsworth, even 'political' action lying in an area which is completely protected from judicial scrutiny".

On January 28, 1977, Mr. Justice Beg was appointed Chief Justice of India in supersession of Mr. Justice H. R. Khanna, the senior-most judge. The Bar protested against the action and expressed its profound respect for Mr. Justice Khanna's independence and courage.

What an impact would all this have had on the High Courts in 1977 if it were not for the overthrow of Mrs. Gandhi? Be it remembered that in 1976 two Additional Judges, Mr. Justice Lalit of the Bombay High Court and Mr. Justice R. N. Agarwal of the Delhi High Court, had not been confirmed as permanent Judges, in violation of established practice, and purely as a punitive measure. In May 1976 as many as 16 High Court Judges including two Chief Justices had been transferred. Among them, of course, was Mr. Justice Rangarajan. It was a deliberate calculated attempt to intimidate the High Courts. The transfers were held invalid by the Gujarat High Court.

The judgments delivered by the Bombay High court in the Nathwani case and in the Masani case and by the Gujarat High Court in the Bhumiputra case had been stayed by the Supreme Court pending appeal. The terms of the stay granted were unusual. Not only the order but the operation of the judgment was also stayed. Many feared that, like the rulings on conditions of detention, these, too, would have been reversed by the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile an unfortunate tendency was creeping in judicial behaviour particularly during this phase. It was the participation of judges in meetings held under the auspices of organisations or individuals linked with the ruling party. Political comment by some judges was becoming common. "Some judges go to some places and discuss politics. It becomes difficult for this court to say anything," Chief Justice Ray remarked on April 19, 1976 while admitting an appeal of 20 advocates of Haryana in a contempt of court case decided by the Punjab and Haryana High Court. The Supreme Court's judgment in the appeal deprecated judges making political comments or accepting the invitation and hospitality of any "business or commercial organisation or of any political party or of any club or organisation run on sectarian, communal or parochial lines". One would think front organisations of the Congress ostensibly devoted to legal subjects which some judges attended habitually fell within the spirit of the ban.

Mr. Justice Beg certainly committed an impropriety when he made the following observations on January 16, 1977 in New Delhi while delivering the Motilal Nehru Lectures under the auspices of the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies:

"I believe that in the Prime Minister we have such leadership and such human material as well as such conditions as to enable us to march faster than ever towards the secular and other ideals embodied in our Constitution".

It is not open to a Judge to make such observations of any Prime Minister or Minister.

All through this period there was a sustained campaign of denigration of the judiciary by the Government. In his famous address on January 16, 1977 Mr. Justice V. D. Tulzapurkar listed as many as three objectionable remarks by Mr. H. R. Gokhale in the course of one speech alone, on the Constitution Amendment Bill.

The thought nags one. Had the people not overthrown Mrs. Gandhi, had the Emergency continued, what would have been the State of judicial independence? The trends were most depressing and bid fair to get worse. The fact that things have turned otherwise has nothing to do with the judiciary and should not make one forget its state before the people gave their verdict.

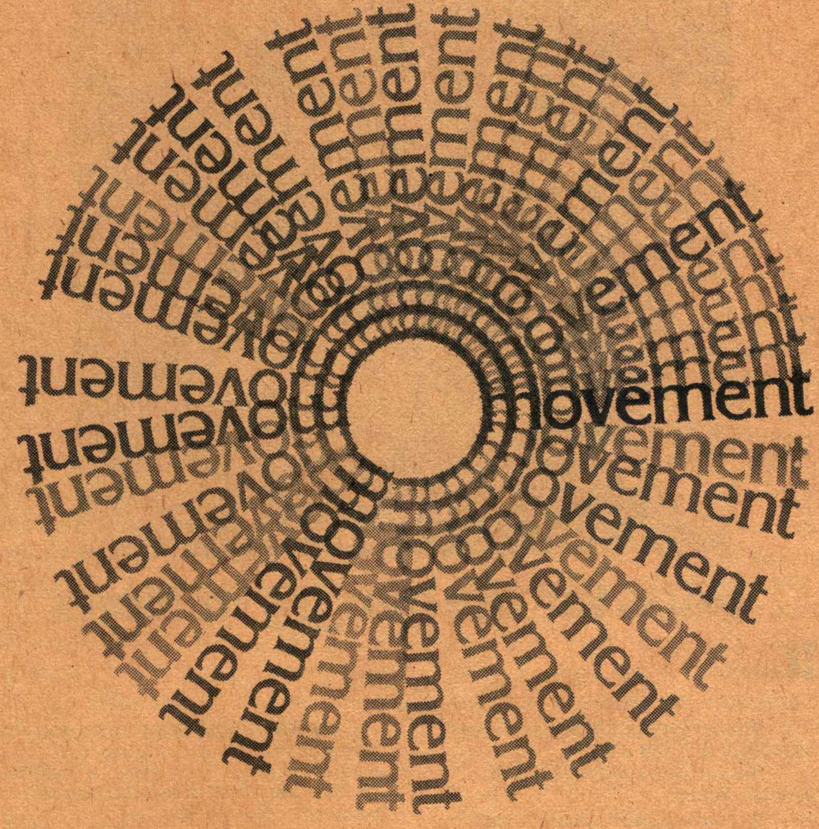
The thought should continue to nag until we are able satisfactorily to answer the question: Why did the High Courts decide the way they did so consistently and the Supreme Court the way it did with equal consistency? The question cannot be evaded and is of crucial importance for the future of the judicial system. **END**

Lost all my money

I've lost all my money,
And I'm on my way home;
Home to the hills and a field of rocks.
Nothing in the city but a sickness of the soul,
Nothing to earn but sorrow. . . .
I've lost all my money
And I'm on my way home,
With nothing to buy my ticket;
Nothing in my pocket and nothing on my feet,
And nothing to buy my way home. . . .
I've lost all my money
And I can't bribe the guard,
So help me, O Lord,
On my way home. . . .

– Ruskin Bond

a great movement



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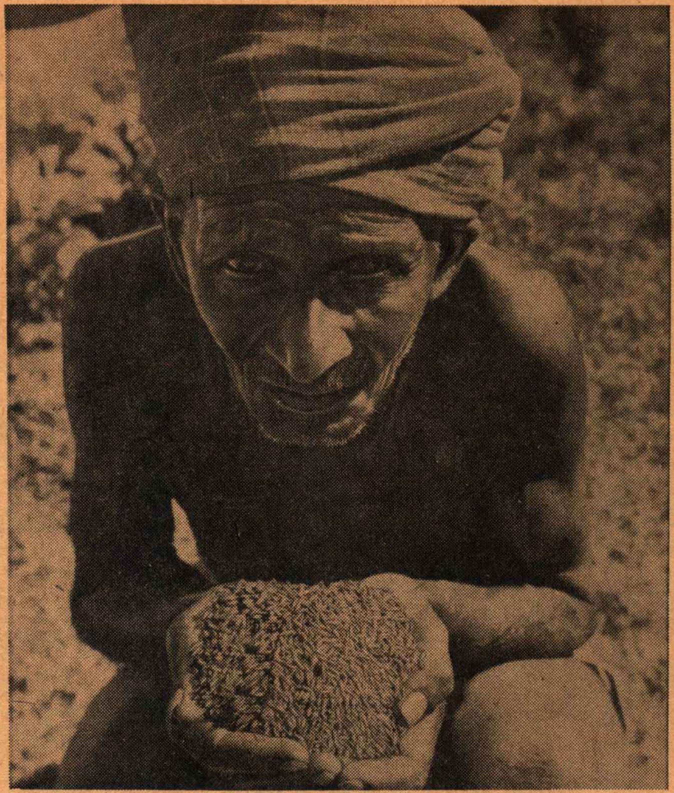

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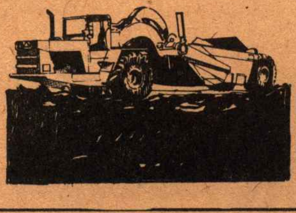

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HOSPITAL WITH A DIFFERENCE

By Sathya Saran

IT LOOKS like any ordinary hospital situated on the first floor of a red brick building. This hospital too offers the same facilities as other hospitals. There is a doctor in charge, a competent, learned man, there is an aged, experienced compounder and there are ward boys who do double duty as nurses. The medicine almirahs are well stocked and the wards are full. There are approximately 2000 wards for regular patients, besides the transit ward and discharge ward.

All this is contained in two narrow floors—and easily enough. For the patients who come to this hospital are birds, and the doctor who sits in charge from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. every day is a veterinary doctor.

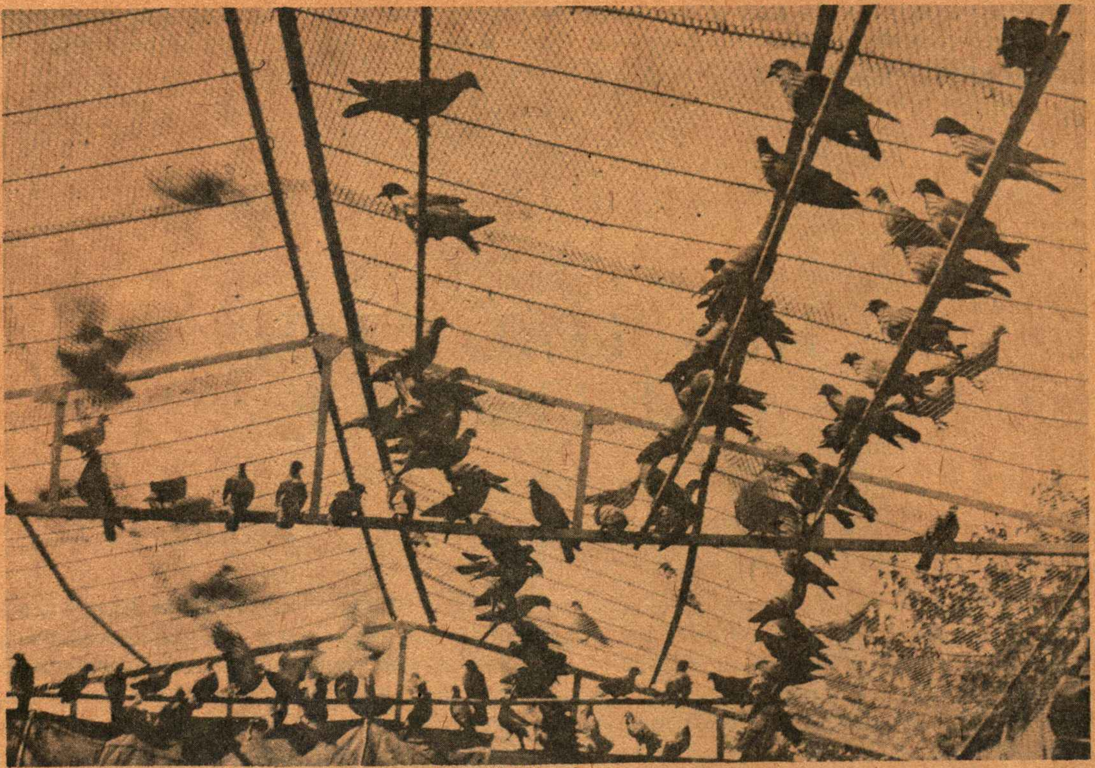
The Charity Birds Hospital (as this remarkable institution is called) is situated inside the Digamber Lal Jain Mandir near Chandni Chowk in Delhi. Established in 1926 by a few Jain 'Munis' who were moved to pity by the sight of some birds lying helpless and injured inside the temple, this hospital is managed by a trust, and exists mainly for the treatment and welfare of birds. It is the only hospital of its kind in the world.

The Trust is very meticulous in running the hospital—every bird brought in is taken care of only after a form is filled by the person who brings the bird. Diagnosis, medicines, treatment, are all noted in separate case charts, and as great care is lavished on maintenance of records as is bestowed on the patients. All treatment is free, though bird owners are welcome to give donations. Cash books are maintained as everywhere else—only the items bought are unusual—either medicines or peanuts, channa, and moong dal. Thanks to the careful maintenance of records the hospital is a success—its patients are many, and its funds are in surplus of requirements!

I discovered all this background information from the framed newspaper cuttings which hang on the walls of the doctor's room. It is winter, as I visit the hospital—and a mild winter at that, and thus there is no rush. The doctor is in a relaxed mood, and is generous with his information as I ply him with questions. His white coat is spotless and his smile warm. Birds make excellent patients, but poor company!

There have been a few patients today, I deduce, from the feathers that lie on the floor and on the doctor's table. The doctor confirms my deductions. Two birds came in today. That is all.

IN SUMMER, the scene is very different, the doctor assures me. In summer "every hour is rush hour"—birds come in suffering from heat stroke, from fractures due to collisions with whirring fans, and from dehydration. If the cold grows more severe, there will be cases of coughs and colds, and pneumonia. When I chuckle at the idea of a sneezing pigeon with a muffler round its throat and its feet in a mustard bath, the doctor looks reprovingly at me and tells me bird illnesses are as serious as human illnesses



Adult birds in the "well-bird ward". *Photo: Pradeep Chandra*

and that birds suffer just as much as humans do.

We walk the wards. All is neat and tidy here—if one ignores the feathers and the messy droppings. The wards are divided into two main sections: the infectious and the non-infectious. The new cases are kept in isolated wards—small barred cages one on top of the other in green iron racks. Each cage has a number which corresponds to the number of the patient's chart. Once the bird is a few days old and on its way to good health, it is moved to the general ward, where other patients of its species are kept.

The general ward is more noisy and active. Birds coo and fret, wings flap, beaks rub and there is a mild flurry of interest and alarm as I approach, which contrasts with the sad eyed, dopey looks given by the sicker birds in the isolated ward.

The younger birds are kept in a separate general ward to prevent them being bossed over by the full grown birds. Pigeons are in the majority here, brown, grey, speckled, they sit roosting on the wire bars, or swing gently on the swings that hang from the ceiling. In the far recesses of the cage, a green and red parrot looks at me with cocked head. In a separate enclosure a peahen ignores me pointedly and pecks determinedly at some non-existent grain. I take the hint and leave—I am holding up lunch with my visit! On the wall opposite the wards are lockers—these are dark, cool wards for birds suffering from fractures and heat stroke. The darkness discourages too much movement, which would be bad for fractured legs. The dark lockers also keep heat-struck birds soothed and cool.

Up the stairs to the second floor and beyond a locked door is a delightful sight—the well-bird ward. Hundreds of birds are here inside a huge mesh-cage that is about 16 feet high and 20′ x 14′ in area.

These are the birds that are fully recovered and waiting to be set free.

In this philanthropic Birds Hospital there is one catch which traps the owner of a sick bird—he cannot take it back home! It is a rule in the hospital that all patients must be set free after they are cured. After all, birds are meant to fly. Luckily for the hospital most owners do not seem to mind, losing a pet to freedom. Perhaps they feel it is better than losing it to death!

How are the birds freed, I enquire. The doctor offers me a demonstration—though it is only Friday, and bird-freeing days are Sundays only, when the Manager of the Hospital is present.

A stool is brought—a nurse cum ward boy cum messenger of freedom climbs it shakily and pulls open a hinged portion of the wire mesh.

The birds continue to chuckle and coo and nudge each other. Freedom holds no charms for them—they are well fed and well tended where they are. In fact (the doctor tells me), instead of the inmates flying out, passers-by often fly in, attracted by the seed and feed that lies around.

The boy climbs down from the stool and moves among the birds. After some active encouragement in the form of much hand waving and shouting by the boy, the birds decide to start.

A flurry of wings, a fuss, a bother, and much noise—and the birds begin to soar upwards. A gentle trying out of wings unused to flying—then the movement gains momentum—flap flap flap—and a blurred moment later, the bird is out, free. One, two, three . . . birds, then more birds—the bid for freedom is an organized movement now. We watch fascinated—then the doctor realises his responsibilities to his management—and shouts at the gaping boy! Clang; the gate slides shut. The birds, confused, mutter in chaos, then go back to brooding in untidy clusters again.

The hospital gets about 8000 birds a year for treatment. And most of them come from areas around Delhi—as far as Meerut and Kalkaji. Patients are brought mainly by poor and middle class people who have heard of the hospital through others. The rich, who own costly birds, prefer going to veterinary hospitals which do not insist on them freeing their pets.

One interesting patient, the doctor adds, was a pigeon which came all the way from Bombay. A pucker of the brow helps him to recall the name of the owner—a Miss Nalini Mehta, who herself runs a mini hospital for animals. This bird had a cross beak, probably a congenital defect, and it took great patience and specialized care to treat it. Of course, Miss Mehta did not see the bird again, as it was freed.

THE HOSPITAL has a peculiar rule, I learn. Being a Jain organization, it does not condone carnivorous habits. Thus, carnivorous birds, like vultures (one came for treatment last year) crows (quite common) and eagles (not so common) are treated only as out-patients. They are not given intensive care. This has a practical reason too, as feeding carnivorous bird patients would be an impossibility within the premises of a Jain temple!

Lunch time in the general ward. *Photo: Pradeep Chandra*

However, the management has made some compromises—ducks are taken in if the bird is very serious. Also, inspite of an obvious preference for non-violent, vegetarian doctors, the hospital has had on its rolls a Sikh non-veg. doctor—on the condition he would not bring chicken curry in his packed lunch.

It is time to leave. The doctor checks his charts and doles out some tablets for some birds in the isolation ward. I watch fascinated as the ward boys push the tablets down the birds' beaks. One conclusive swallow and the pill slides down the silky throat. Keys jangle, locks click, and the doctor starts for home.

And rest. Unless of course a new patient comes in for admission. But the doctor assures me he has never yet been summoned outside hours. Unlike humans, birds wait for the doctor!

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TWO FACES OF INDIRA GANDHI

by
Uma Vasudev

Preface

"EVERYBODY is speaking the truth, but at the wrong time!" exclaimed a Congress leader at the meeting of the All India Congress committee, in a post mortem session after their astounding defeat. That just about sums it up.

I was shocked at the truth. It was easy for those opposed to Indira Gandhi from the very start to believe the worst. It was difficult for those who had faith in her to face it.

The period till 1972 was the theme of my first book on Indira Gandhi. The period since then, which initiated the trends leading to the emergency, forms the theme of this one. Between the two books, as between one face of Indira Gandhi and the other, lies a lost connection.

Indira Gandhi is not a simple woman; nor was the office she held. Each issue which has cropped up during the writing of this book merits a separate analysis. I have sought to relate them to one driving passion of Indira Gandhi, that may bind them together. Politics? Love? Ideology? Fear? Ego? Motherhood? Ambition? What it is depends on where the reader looks. For me, it was like unravelling a mystery that baffled her nearest colleagues as well as her profoundest enemies.

I have based this book on the live but historic material provided by the top leadership of the Congress and its workers. They are perhaps the only ones to know the truth about Indira Gandhi.

I wish to thank them all for talking to me at length and with the perception that gave the clue to what happened to Mrs Gandhi. As her old colleague and political stalwart Kamlapati Tripathi says, "Here was a person who was flying in the air and is now in the dust . . . adulated in the capitals of the world, but now abused by the very persons she created out of nothing." The story becomes both human and political.

New Delhi
August 1977

UMA VASUDEV

This is an abridged version of the book published by Vikas Publishing House Private Ltd. Rs. 30/-.

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UMA VASUDEV

The Men in Her Politics

SITTING IN Pachmarhi in June 1976, Pandit Dwarka Prasad Mishra, Indira Gandhi's tactician and confidant in her battle for intra-party supremacy in 1967–69, related an anecdote to an administrator friend calling on him: "There was a political prisoner I knew in the thirties who was so fond of his pet cat that he was allowed to keep it with him in his cell. One day his nerves cracked and he beat the cat blue. The cat sat cowering in a corner, not knowing where to turn, for the cell door was locked and it was trapped. Each time its one-time protector would come near, it would shrink against the wall and whimper. The jailor heard the cries and came running. As soon as the cell door flew open, the cat, instead of rushing out, leapt at her owner's throat in such ferocious anger that he nearly died before they could release its grip. The moral of the story is," said Mishra, "that if you want to hit the enemy, you must leave a way out for him. Otherwise his despair can make him a killer."

The reference was Maoist but the application was nearer home. It was one year since Indira Gandhi had declared an internal emergency in India on 26 June 1975. The opposition elite was still in jail. Censorship of the media was still in force. Argument and dissent were mouthed in whispers, while rumour aggravated fear.

Obviously, Mishra thought "Indiraji" was pushing the situation too hard.

But by then he was, in many ways, too far away from her to communicate either his protest or his apprehensions. His rapport with the prime minister had broken in 1972 when he found himself being cleverly edged out of the orbits of confidence. It had been a typical manoeuvre in which Indira Gandhi's lieutenants did for her what she had wanted done. What happened to him set the pattern. Why it happened provides some clues to the later metamorphosis of her personality.

Mishra was chief minister of Madhya Pradesh from 1965 to 1967. Later resident in Delhi, he was one of the few people in the period between 1967 and 1972 who acquired the reputation of being close to the prime minister. That in itself became one factor of disqualification in her eyes. The second was the growing feeling in the capital that Mishra was becoming ambitious enough to aspire for home ministership in the union cabinet. That was reason enough to cut him down to size. The third was that he was prepared for a direct confrontation with the communists at a time when Mrs Gandhi was going through a very enthusiastic Left phase. Anybody who differed became suspect.

But there was a fourth factor. By 1972 Mishra was beginning to get suspicious of Haryana Chief Minister Bansi Lal's role. He warned Indira Gandhi that he feared the rugged *jat*'s intelligence network spreading its tentacles into her own house. "For a politician truth and facts are impossible to disregard. She and I had one agreement. 'I'll tell you the most unpleasant things,' I said to her, 'but I'll never ask why you haven't done this or that.' When I realized," said Mishra, "that unpleasant facts were becoming unwelcome, I left."

Not the Allahabad high court judgement on 12 June 1975, which placed her election into jeopardy, nor the emergency on 26 June 1975 which brought her democratic credibility into question, nor even the political birth with that of Sanjay Gandhi as the prime ministerial alter ago, were the watersheds in the life and politics of Indira Gandhi. It was 1971, the year of her own birth as political leader, when she stepped out of the Nehru shadow, when she felt she could deal with men—like Mishra—who had served under her father in her own right, according to her own needs, and according to her own style. "I would support her right up to the split in 1969 completely. Before that she was not her own master in the organization or the Lok Sabha," said D. P. Mishra. But one can carry that support right through the consolidation of her party in 1970, the calculated victory over the question of Bangladesh, to the fantastic mandate of the 1971 parliamentary elections and the assembly elections in 1972.

But there were two ways for her to react to this achievement. She could have gained such confidence that it could have made her generous and large hearted. Instead, she became jealous and fearful.

"If she had turned the other way at that point she could have been like Nehru, I suppose," I said in a discussion later.

"Greater than Nehru," said Chandrajit Yadav, former minister of steel in Indira's ministry, "but she never had the principled approach and humanism of Nehru."

In Nehru, the confidence was inborn. In Indira, it was the insecurity. Nothing else explains the ideological drift of the years after a solid political achievement like Bangladesh on the international front, and the support that became manifestly hers on the domestic one. Contained in both these successes was the germ of fear. Suddenly there was too much at stake for her, and it had to be jealously protected. From 1969 to 1972 she had little to lose because she was fighting a cause. From 1972 to 1977 she had everything to lose because she was safeguarding the establishment.

Indira Gandhi's style did not change. It was her emphasis which did.

"Mrs Gandhi did plan towards central authority but not towards dictatorship," analyzes Chandra Shekhar, now president of the Janata Party, but at that time an emerging Young Turk in the prime minister's effort to fashion a leftist orientation. "She had a peculiar sense of insecurity. The first symptoms were there long before, when she began to move away from Ashok Mehta. Soon after 1967 she became suspicious of people who had a standing in public life. When the cabinet was formed Ashok Mehta was not willing to join at first because she did not consult her own colleagues, even about their portfolios. She's always playing with three or four ideas at the same time. Then she sees which one is the most feasible and acts upon it. If she has to take an unpleasant decision, it is not on ethical grounds. In the presidential elections in 1969, I was in favour of supporting Mr Giri from the beginning, but she preferred to prevaricate outwardly."

"It started from the time of the split," says Dinesh Singh also, former foreign minister in Indira's cabinet and now a member of the Janata Party. "My idea was that she should not have accepted Sanjeeva Reddy. We could have taken the same decision without her agreeing to his candidature. I was opposed to the split. Then, where was the point in throwing out Morarji? He had accepted being number two to her; he was disciplined enough to work with her whatever his ambitions. I was in America at the time. When I came back I told her I didn't agree with this decision. The Congress (O) was dubbed a rightist group, but when did Morarji ever block any legislation? It was to assert her supremacy, that was the reason."

"Why should you have continued to support her then?" I asked Dinesh Singh.

"Indiraji was still fresh, people responded to the generation question. You can take one wrong decision—after all, it was her right to make that choice—but when she represented modern trends, argued for changes in the country and a movement towards socialism, you had to support her."

Dinesh Singh too was ultimately eased out, partly for the same reasons. She had placed him in an exalted position as foreign minister in 1969–70, out of proportion to the political backing he could muster. However, she started suspecting him when he tried to organize a base for himself in UP with the help of the other Rajput MLAs. Himself a member of the Kitchen Cabinet, an earlier version of the later caucus, he came into clash with the one-man centre of power who was functioning non-officially on her behalf even then—her private secretary, Yashpal Kapoor.

Dinesh Singh's reputation for being close to Indira Gandhi held a connotation different from that of Mishra's, but the aspirations to power became just as suspect.

Inder Kumar Gujral was picked by Indira Gandhi because of his personal allegiance to her when she was minister of information and broadcasting in Shastri's cabinet, and also later, in the dramatic struggle for power against Morarji Desai. Gujral is a liberal, slow moving, but imaginative man who thinks in terms of concepts. The media is his medium. In 1965–66, he and Romesh Thapar, the editor of *Seminar*, used to work out plans to create media consciousness as a broad policy measure, and feed her with their ideas. That was the time when, as minister of information and broadcasting, Mrs Gandhi came up with her one-hundred crore rupee scheme for television and met with various hurdles on finance allocations. However, she instituted the Chanda Committee to work out the possibility of creating an autonomous corporation for All India

Radio, as part of her repeated affirmations that she wanted diversity of expression. "As soon as she became prime minister," recalls Inder Gujral, "she made it very clear that AIR should function as a government medium."

By then Gujral had himself been appointed minister of information and broadcasting by Mrs Gandhi. He went on to make the radio a campaign instrument of such force in the crucial presidential election of 1969 that it virtually controlled the outcome in Giri's—and therefore Mrs Gandhi's—favour. Gujral was termed the Goebbels of the Indian scene much before Vidya Charan Shukla earned this encomium years later in 1975.

"In any history of this period," comments a colleague of Gujral, "Gujral is one man who can be held responsible for creating her. But even he was brought down!"

Indira Gandhi had no reason to fear Gujral. But there were complaints that he was appearing too often on television himself, and building his own image. Besides, he had continued his association with Dinesh Singh who, by 1971, was out, and out of favour. Finally, Gujral was beginning to play it cool—politically—with the medium after 1969, and not doing what she wanted faithfully enough. Perhaps having won her the battle over the media in 1969, he wanted to live it down and give non-political creative effort a natural boost. As a result he was turned out of broadcasting and appointed minister of state for housing.

The choice of ministry had a background—which reveals that Indira forgets nothing. When she first wanted to induct Gujral into the government in 1967, she had asked him which ministry he would prefer. "Anything but housing," he had replied. Gujral did not want to be associated with any position in which he could be blamed for favouring Satish Gujral, his famous artist brother, whose possible contracts for sculpting murals on public buildings would somehow involve his ministry. Mrs Gandhi had not asked the reason, but had obviously concluded that Gujral disliked housing. When the time came to punish him, she chose the same ministry for him. He thus had to join as minister of state for works and housing in 1971. Within one year, however, on 24 July 1972, Gujral came a cropper.

The tall, elegant yogi in a milk-white *dhoti*, walked into Gujral's office one day.

"There's a file pending with you about my request for additional property for my yogashram," said the swami.

"Yes, I'm sorry, we cannot do anything about it," replied Gujral.

"Either you give me the land or I'll see you're out of the ministry by tomorrow!" warned the swami.

"It's difficult," said Gujral, "there are rules!"

The next day, Gujral got his orders to quit and rejoin information and broadcasting. Things were never the same again between him and Mrs Gandhi.

Who was this swami? Where had he come from? What hold could he have on the prime minister?

It was in the year 1957. Indira was on tour and decided to take a week's rest in a place called Shikargah, near Pahalgaum. She was with her two sons, Rajiv and Sanjay. Yashpal Kapoor accompanied her. It was a quiet, beautiful day. She was playing with the boys, then only ten and twelve. Kapoor was sitting on a large stone some distance away. Clop, clop, clop, he heard wooden sandals behind him. He turned and saw a straight-backed, muslin-clad swami with a long beard walking past into the beauteous surroundings. Later he saw him following them on horseback. My God, thought Kapoor, he looks like Christ.

The swami stopped him, "I'd like to meet her," he said.

"No," said Kapoor, "she's not meeting anyone. She's here for a rest."

"What did he want?" Indira asked Kapoor. He told her.

"Well, why not?" she remarked.

So Kapoor fixed the appointment.

It was Swami Dhirendra Brahmachari. He talked of matters far removed from the political whirl of Delhi. He began teaching her sons simple exercises in yoga even in Shikargah. In Delhi he became a frequent visitor at Teen Murti House and eventually gave yoga lessons to Nehru and Indira herself.

Swami Dhirendra was also a friend of Jagjivan Ram at the time, but relations soon turned sour! He was allotted government accommodation at 1 Jantar Mantar Road. When compelled to give that up, he set up his yoga centre in a house in Defence Colony. The swami set up a trust for his yogashram, with—according to Yashpal Kapoor—JP, Jagjivan Ram, Naval Tata and others as trustees, and Morarji as patron. In 1968, Morarji was deputy prime minister, also

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holding finance, but he refused to sanction an area of one and a half acres in the heart of New Delhi for the elaborate yogashram planned by the swami. In 1969, Indira dismissed Morarji, held finance herself for a year, and the swami got his land.

Ousted because of the swami, but back to his favourite ministry, Gujral remained chastened and uncertain. He began clutching at straws for survival. The swami appeared in regular half-hour television shows teaching yoga. But Mrs Gandhi once annoyed, is as deceptive as a running stream—all ripple and flow on the surface, but still and immune deep inside.

Gujral was already in conflict with Mrs Gandhi's new inner conclave when 20 June 1975 brought him under the spell of special displeasure exercised by Sanjay Gandhi. Sanjay had become the organizing spirit behind the rallies, the poster campaign, and the massive propaganda initiative that hypnotized even the Congress leadership into raising a battle cry against the Allahabad high court judgement.

Sanjay began where Gujral had left off in 1969. Ironically enough, Gujral was at the receiving end of retribution in 1975. The day after the Boat Club rally addressed by the prime minister in New Delhi—organized on a gigantic scale to prove her hold on the public—there was a belligerent phone call from Sanjay to Gujral, his mother's minister. Why, he asked shrilly, was the rally not relayed directly on television? Gujral swallowed his pride and replied quietly that he would check up.

The rule was that political party rallies were never relayed on television, though there had been exceptions since 1971 on the direct orders of the then director general. This time, Gujral got the report, no request or demand had been made to the TV centre. In any case all such decisions were taken at meetings in the ministry attended by the prime minister's press adviser, Sharada Prasad. However, all the prime minister's speeches at the round-about near her house, where daily rallies were held throughout that fortnight, began to be covered. Mrs Gandhi was still annoyed. She thought the camera angles of shots were taken to show her at a deliberate disadvantage, and no action was being taken on that.

Having once flouted its own rule so openly, the media ministry found itself in a quandary. The opposition were organizing their rally on 25 June and Jayaprakash Narayan was to address it. P. C. Chatterjee, the director general, decided it should be covered. The minister called a meeting which was attended by, among others, Professor P. N. Dhar, the prime minister's principal private secretary, and N. K. Mukerjee, the home secretary. Gujral explained the problem, then turned to Mukerjee, who said coolly: "I think Professor Dhar can advise." Dhar thought for a minute. "This is a media problem. The media should tackle it." "What should we do then?" Gujral asked the director general. "I think it should be covered," he answered.

He suggested they could take certain shots of JP addressing the meeting, and of the procession at various points, but avoid misleading the viewers with exaggerated shots either way.

This was only the beginning of Gujral's woes. On 23 June the supreme court granted Mrs Gandhi the stay order, but with certain conditions. She could function as prime minister till the supreme court's judgement, but she could not vote in parliament. AIR's correspondent posted there rushed through with the news for immediate broadcast in English, which gave an optimistic slant by saying "Mrs Gandhi remains Prime Minister." For the Hindi news at 4 o'clock AIR took the Press Trust of India version, which gave the conditions and conveyed a different impression. This brought an angry demand from the PM's house. Sanjay wanted all news broadcast scripts to be shown to him first. Another complaint reached the prime minister—it said that Gujral had no influence with foreign media at all and that BBC had broadcast a very damaging interpretation.

"The PM would like to see you," came a terse call from Dhawan to Gujral.

Before going, Gujral checked up and found that a Pakistani news broadcast had been mistaken for the BBC one. He rang Mrs Gandhi, explaining that nobody could be expected to use any influence that end. She calmed down a bit. But when Gujral reached her house, Sanjay came storming out of the anteroom.

"You don't seem to know how to control your ministry," he said loudly. "Can't you tell them how to put out the news even?"

Gujral kept himself under control. "Look, I'm equally upset, and concerned. But I don't have to give any explanation to you." He brushed him aside politely and went in to see Mrs Gandhi.'

He clarified to the PM that it was not possible to forestall the pattern of late news announcements because the slips were sent in to the newsreader while news was being read. At the time of the first broadcast there was a flash about the supreme court decision. For the second broadcast in Hindi more details came in, so more were read out. In fact, the news was rephrased and broadcast again at 4.30 pm. Mrs Gandhi kept quiet.

But the day the emergency was to be declared P. N. Bahl, joint secretary in the PM's secretariat, walked into the news-room of All India Radio at 6 am and took charge. At 6 am Director General Chatterjee received a phone call from Gujral. "Get a team ready to record a message by the prime minister," he instructed. "But don't send it till I tell you."

Chatterjee contacted Station Director Barooah, and told him to rush to office.

At 7 am, Gujral rang again.

"Send the team to the PM's house. The message has to be broadcast in place of the news bulletin at 8."

In place of the news bulletin?

It was then that Chatterjee realized something big was in the offing. But he was in a quandary about whether or not to make an announcement beforehand of the PM's broadcast to the nation. What if the team did not return in time for the 8 o'clock bulletin, he wondered. He issued orders, however, that all services should take the broadcast, and that all stations were to relay it simultaneously. The Hindi team made it just two minutes to 8, followed by the English one. It was in the nick of time. But there was criticism of the fact that a prior announcement about the broadcast had not been made. Sharada Prasad was in touch with the DG but he did not tell him. He told the news-room, so the DG used his own discretion.

But the ministry was Gujral's and Gujral was found "too soft" in his handling of the media, particularly of the press, and very particularly on the night of the emergency. The decision to cut off electricity to all presses, so that there could be no news of the pre-dawn arrests of national leaders, was not implemented effectively enough even in Delhi itself.

On 26 June there were a group of friends sitting at Gujral's house in the evening when the call came from the PM's house to come over. Gujral lost colour. At 9.30 pm he was relieved of his charge.

"Anytime now," he thought early the next morning, "they'll come for me, like Chandra Shekhar."

He knew Indira Gandhi had become suspicious of his loyalty. One of the reasons was that he was supposed to have visited Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Babu Jagjivan Ram much too often and too quietly between the vital fortnight of 12–25 June.

Earlier, she had resented his meeting Dinesh Singh, even socially, but this was more crucial. For her colleagues it created an artificiality in political demeanour which soured personal relationships. "I don't know what her thinking was that she never retained regard for old connections," exclaimed Dinesh Singh, as perplexed as the rest of the then Congress leadership over this prime ministerial trait. "She had not kept up any personal relations in politics, but I have. Panditji never got on with JP but he maintained the connection. Ours is a soft society. It is never easy to engineer a clash."

What Indira Gandhi did was to encourage a code of loyalty with such rigid ramifications that like everything else, these became accentuated during the emergency. Loyalty to the Congress was not enough; it had to be loyalty expressed in terms of unequivocal personal allegiance to her. Once a mistrust arose in her mind about any of her colleagues, even the ordinary acceptance of a dinner invitation where Jagjivan Ram was to be chief guest, for instance, was interpreted as a sign of disloyalty. Gujral had survived the emergency crisis as well, but only because President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed pleaded with her on his behalf. Two days after the declaration of the emergency on 28 June at 9.30 am, he was asked to take charge as minister of state for planning. He was virtually pushed into the backwaters. He did not resign, nor did she relent. In March 1976, he was appointed India's ambassador to Moscow, bruited as the top post in the diplomatic galaxy, but an effective enough instrument, as far as she was concerned, to remove him from politics.

The most controversial intra-play within the Congress Party which symbolized the issues devouring the vitals of the organization was the Indira-Bahuguna-Kapoor-Sanjay syndrome. Not a single Congressman, belonging to either the pro-Indira or anti-Indira group within the party, fails to mention "the case of Bahuguna" as an example of her relentless pressure against anyone "promising, talented and with a future," even if the person proclaimed unimpeachable loyalty. Gujral had said on repeated occasions that the thing which hurt him most was her doubts about his allegiance, and that any other accusation but this could have made sense.

It has been Mrs Gandhi's contention that those she supported and nurtured invariably let her down. Her natural inclination was to pick the intelligent and the ebullient. Her equally natural fear of being overshadowed made her start distrusting them.

"May be she was not far wrong," commented Chandra Shekhar on the subject. "Look at the way they have all discarded her now—particularly her most vociferous companions of the Left! If anyone were to mete out punishment, it is they who should be jailed first."

Chandra Shekhar obviously referred to Barooah, Ray, and Chandrajit Yadav, but Mrs Gandhi had made as much use of them as they had of her. The Bahuguna episode repeated a set pattern. He was flamboyant, but an organizational genius who functioned on her behalf as general secretary of the Congress in 1969, and earned his reward by being appointed union minister of state for communications. Later, he was installed in UP as chief minister by the Centre with the implicit stipulation that Delhi would wield all the final sanctions.

Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna was a clever man. Clever enough to fall in, and clever enough to bide his time. From pre-independence politics as a student leader in Allahabad University (jailed in 1942), he had grown into a strong, dynamic personality with a flair for being on the winning side. Indira's was the winning side, but the vast expanse of UP politics was an irresistible territory to conquer. Bahuguna did not think the two need necessarily clash. But if he allowed Mrs Gandhi her ascendance, she was not prepared to allow him his ambition. She felt much the same about him as Kamaraj had felt about her after he helped make her prime minister—that pliability has changing shapes.

In 1969, when Babu Jagjivan Ram became Congress president, Bahuguna was general secretary. After the split in the Congress, Mrs Gandhi wanted him to go back to UP. Bahuguna preempted her decision, and inveigled the announcement from Jagjivan Ram that he would retain Bahuguna in the same capacity in the central organization. "Look at him," exclaimed a ruffled Indira, "he's gone and had it announced from there." She was again irritated when she found that in the 1971 Lok Sabha elections Bahuguna had been paying twenty parliamentary candidates more than the amount stipulated by the All India Congress Committee; this was presumably in order to make them "his men." After the elections, on a trip to Rae Bareli, Bahuguna managed to get a seat on the same plane as the PM. When she suggested that he should become union minister of state for communications, he refused. "You can do something first," she urged. "The promotion will come later." He wouldn't agree.

When she communicated this to Uma Shankar Dixit and others at Rae Bareli, it was Kapoor's comment that planted the first seed of distrust. "He has defied you," he said.

For one month Bahuguna cooled his heels.

Mrs Gandhi was then told that Bahuguna had made Raj Narain file the now famous election petition against her. It was possible that his association was only to emulate C. B. Gupta who had, as CM, always sought to use the Socialist Party in UP as a pocket party. In fact, Bahuguna had made a frantic call from Lucknow to Delhi the morning the petition was filed.

N. K. Seshan, another close aide, had then contacted Kapoor.

"Bahuguna just rang up the PM. He's told her that Raj Narain had filed the petition and wants to know whether we have got a lawyer on our behalf."

"Till the court sends a summons, we can't do anything," said Kapoor, and added, "Seshan, he's not rung up about the election petition. He wants something for himself."

The PM laughed when Seshan told her of Kapoor's reaction. It was decided to get Bahuguna to Delhi.

"*Gurudev,*" rang out Kapoor's throaty voice over 300 miles that morning to Bahuguna, "*bulawwa hai,* come."

Bahuguna arrived the next day. It was a Sunday. That was the day Indira Gandhi tried not to see anybody. But the insidious way in which the pattern worked, and how egos got involved was, in this case, only a preview of what got distorted under conditions of the emergency.

Bahuguna rang the PM's house. The PA on duty informed Kapoor. Kapoor instructed him to let Bahuguna keep ringing. Every half hour, Bahuguna would ring till it was 7.30 in the evening and he finally lost his temper. "The PM has called me here!" he shouted. "She'll think I haven't come if you don't tell her."

Kapoor had the PA put the call through to him. "Who rang you up?" asked Kapoor.

Bahuguna was thoroughly exasperated. "You did."

"Why didn't you ring me up?"

Kapoor then informed the PM, who said that Bahuguna should first see Uma Shankar Dixit.

"Go and meet Bhishmapitamah," relayed Kapoor to Bahuguna, using the common mythological reference for Dixit. Humour was evidently not at a discount even in the power game.

When finally Bahuguna got to meet Mrs Gandhi, she offered him the position of minister of state for communications. This time, Bahuguna accepted.

By the end of 1973, Kamlapati Tripathi was at a low ebb as chief minister in UP. There were allegations against his son, and general discontent. President's rule was imposed. Elections had to be held. There were continuous meetings at the PM's house. Several suggestions were made, but Kapoor's were the operative ones.

"If you keep Tripathiji, we can't win," said he to the PM.

"Who then!" she asked.

"Make Bahuguna the chief minister."

"You know what he's like," she remarked.

"I know he's a *tikrami* (trickster)," admitted Kapoor.

"You never know what he'll do afterwards," she rejoined.

"He'll be in your hands," said Kapoor. "You can do what you like."

Bahuguna now says that by then Sanjay had begun to make his presence felt in the ministerial sphere, implying that one of the reasons for his ouster from Delhi was Sanjay's unhappiness with him. He recalled having issued a blanket order in his ministry for the transfer of all those who had been in Delhi for over ten years. This hit one of Sanjay's engineer friends whom the prime minister's son wished should remain in Delhi. Bahuguna said he couldn't make such an obvious exception, and the man had to go. "As soon as I left the ministry, the man was back," says Bahuguna. "I never wanted to go to UP even as chief minister."

He had, in fact, been offered the deputy chief ministership, but refused. When he was persuaded to accept, Kamlapati Tripathi refused to have him. The way the situation developed suggests more of an accidental progression of events than calculated moves on Mrs Gandhi's part to ensure central control as part of a preconceived plan. But the criterion was definitely subservience to her will. The UP Legislature Party was nowhere in the picture. All the moves as to who should be chief minister were worked out amongst a close coterie in the capital. Those selected in Delhi were expected to get a routine sanction from a willing concourse of the state's MLAs. Procedurally all the right motions would be gone through, but substantively, decision-making had been usurped by the Centre.

It was decided that Narain Dutt Tiwari, who was then chief whip in the UP Legislature Party, would carry a note to the UP governor demanding restoration of the elected government. Tripathi was to become chief minister again and he was to decide the composition of his ministry with Uma Shankar Dixit and Shankar Dayal Sharma the next morning. But Kapoor planted a little seed in the prime minister's mind again that night, which changed the situation radically. She need not have listened to him, but that she was vulnerable to his suggestions shows where her own suspicions lay. He wrote her a little note. "Tripathiji will become CM. He's not agreeing to your suggestions even now. What will he do later?"

The prime minister told Tiwari not to deliver the letter to the governor till further instructions. The next day she flew off to Kerala. Tiwari rang Tripathi from Lucknow informing him of the latest position. The same morning Shankar Dayal and Dixit enquired from Tripathi when they should come over. Tripathi was gruff. "No ministry," he said. "I'm going to Benares. If she needs me, she can call me."

They rang the PM in Kerala. "If he's angry, he's angry, what can I do from here!" she said and banged the telephone down.

Bahuguna became chief minister.

Immediately, with the 1974 assembly elections themselves, he earned the allegation that he had got those candidates defeated "whose loyalty was supposed to be direct to Delhi." A strange concept; what did it mean, this "loyalty to Delhi?"

"To Indira Gandhi herself," affirmed a loyal Congressman. "You know, the kind of people who said 'we're in the Congress only because of Indiraji.'"

"What about loyalty to the party?" I asked him.

"Well, that yes, of course, but there's a personal attachment, a leader you prefer. It's part of politics, this groupism. You have to accept it. Why did you have a C. B. Gupta group for that matter, why a Tripathi group?"

Why indeed? Why have those who were

Nehru's fans and those who were Patel's right within the Congress? But that was a period when the Congress Party needed an internal polarization of ideas and ideologies, so the crosscurrents were inevitable. After 1969, when Indira Gandhi made an issue out of Left orientation and got herself such fervent support, the party could have been cohered together on a programmatic basis. Admittedly, the Bangladesh war and its repercussions took two years away. The months of 1973 were the real test phase, however. But even in 1974, the game of manipulative politics had begun, with a sharper edge to involvement and the growing tension which led to such tragic consequences for party functioning later.

Bahuguna in UP was both victim and participant, like the rest of the Congress leadership. "Delhi" was expecting to win around 280 seats in the assembly; Bahuguna was attributed to have deliberately aimed at only 216 for the Congress, so that the party remained weak and Bahuguna himself in power. Attempts to dislodge him thereafter would result in a revolt by "his faction" and the fall of the Congress ministry. For "Delhi" to feel this and for Bahuguna to even think of executing such a plan were a symptom of the future that lay in store for the party only two years later.

A touch of ideology did, indeed, come with the confrontation over the Birla issue in 1974. "Delhi" wanted to support K. K. Birla's candidature (for the Rajya Sabha from UP), as an independent against Raj Narain, who had lost in 1972 to another industrialist, V. R. Mohan. First they had suggested a person called Prakash Mehrotra, and Bahuguna had reacted very strongly: "What, the sugar lobby? I don't want him." He was ill in hospital when he sent a message to the PM about their second choice.

"K. K. Birla won't win."

"What's the harm in trying?" said Kapoor who played a dominant role in the affair.

He went to Lucknow with prime ministerial sanction and got enough opposition MLAs on his side to ensure Birla's win by secret ballot. But Bahuguna returned in time to station his whips and the voting had to be open. When he himself went to vote, he hugged Raj Narain for everyone to see and exclaimed, "You, of course, are our friend!" Birla lost and Bahuguna made a speech in the assembly the next day, saying that capitalists had no place in his scheme of things. This came into confrontation with a trend symbolized by Sanjay which was crystallizing into an anti-socialist pro-free enterprise and multinationals one. Not only had Bahuguna shown his predilection for the leftist bloc, he had proved his own strength against that of "Delhi." This presaged his final downfall, and perhaps the first step towards the eventual birth of the Congress for Democracy.

"She did not like my getting established there," charges Bahuguna. "Governor Akbar Ali was replaced because we got on well together. B. N. Kureel was made PCC (Pradesh Congress Committee) president but he too was shifted because he wouldn't quarrel with me. Then Lakshmi Shankar Yadav was sent as president of the PCC; election was replaced by nomination. Then Mohsina Kidwai. Alright, but why could she not be elected? Indiraji's use of 'we' was gradually replaced by 'I'."

"There was a grievance against you that you worked against the official candidates," I told Bahuguna.

"Why did she not establish an enquiry committee? It was very strange. As we say, *ajeeb raaz hai, na gawah hai, na daleel hai, na vakil hai* (a strange case this; there is no witness, no argument and no defence)."

Eventually, even tantric ritual was brought into the power game. Swami Poornanand used to be a *pujari* (priest) in a temple at Allahabad. He and two of his brothers practice tantra, while the fourth concentrates on ayurvedic medicine.

When Swami Poornanand shifted to Satna in Madhya Pradesh, Bahuguna, who had known him in Allahabad, was a frequent visitor there. "We kept hearing of his visits but we didn't think anything of them," says Kapoor. "They were private visits and even the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh wasn't informed. It was only later that all sorts of rumours began to reach us that he was trying to have tantric *pujas* done to bring Mrs Gandhi down, so that he could be prime minister." It is an unbelievable facet of political goings on but Kapoor said that he sent his own man, a Chandra Swami, to win the confidence of Poornanand to find out the truth. That is how they learnt that Poornanand's younger brother was conducting a mystical ceremony near a famous temple in Maihar. Bahuguna, his son Vijay, and a friend, Ram Adhar Pandey, had taken a *sankalp* (vow), and the responsibility for being the medium to communicate ill luck to Mrs Gandhi, Sanjay, and R. K. Dhawan respectively.

Bahuguna refutes all this with contempt. "The only swami I went to was a family friend who had treated me for a heart ailment in 1965. I wrote to Indiraji about the Satna affair, but there was no response of course."

This was like a pale prelude to the suspicion brewing in the PM's house that Bahuguna, along with Justice Sinha, was involved in a conspiracy against Mrs Gandhi. At a party in Satna in the first week of the vital month of June 1975, Bahuguna is reported to have exclaimed, "*Are*, she's going for six years now. Kapoor charges me for finishing Indiraji through the judge—I'll finish Kapoor!"

Then, on 12 June 1975, came the judgement.

Nothing that Bahuguna said or did had any effect on Mrs Gandhi after that. Her prejudice was like a wall against which he beat his head repeatedly, and in vain. Sanjay confided to a colleague in August the same year that Bahuguna would soon be out and UP politics would be more manageable. Sanjay was beginning to mouth his mother's opinions quite strongly by then.

Har Charan Singh Josh, then general secretary of the Youth Congress, went on a tour of western UP on 5 August. He came back and reported to Sanjay that the people were talking against the emergency, and against Mrs Gandhi. Sanjay remarked that it was Bahuguna who was betraying them. He told Josh to discuss UP affairs with Kapoor.

Josh tried to persuade Bahuguna to meet Sanjay. "I have worked with Panditji and Indiraji. I can't go to a little boy who is like my son," replied Bahuguna. But Josh managed to take him to the Maruti premises. They rang the factory and found Sanjay, who came to the telephone. As soon as Bahuguna said, "Sanjayji, I wanted to meet. . . ." the line got disconnected.

"I don't know whether it was deliberate or not," recalls Josh. "I kept trying for half an hour to get through, but they kept saying that Sanjay had gone inside the factory and no telephone could reach him."

Early the 27th morning of November, Bahuguna did meet Sanjay at Maruti. He came away looking deathly pale. Later, he walked with forced exuberance to the house of Mohammad Yunus, carrying a large bouquet of flowers to congratulate him on his appointment as the PM's special envoy. But he also carried with him a plea—"Can't you do something, Yunus *Bhai*?" Yunus expressed his helplessness, murmuring later to a friend who was present, "I like Bahuguna. But he's on his way out, what can I do? He should not have encouraged Kapoor so much."

The same evening Bahuguna was told to submit his resignation.

His public face remained impeccable. "The High Command which sent me to UP is competent to call me back. I have no complaints," he said.

But instructions had immediately been issued to the censor—"All stories on Bahuguna filed from Lucknow to be pre-censored. Only factual information to be allowed." The black out was intended to be total. "We'll see what they do when the time for elections comes," said Bahuguna angrily to a friend. "Then I'll show them."

Between 29 November 1975 and 18 January 1977, when Mrs Gandhi announced the elections, Bahuguna says he wrote her seven letters which sought to clear misunderstandings there might be in her mind. He did not get a single reply. He asked for an interview thirty-eight times. On 18 January he sent her a telegram offering his help and cooperation during the elections. No reply. Whenever he did get to meet her with an explanation she would say that others were giving her a contrary version. On Bahuguna's part it was, perhaps, the last desperate attempt to stay in the organization he had been brought up in, and to seek an equation with the charisma that Mrs Gandhi still had about her. Like the gasping of a man about to drown in the organization, or the obstinacy of a politician who would never give up. And after all, they were all beginning to feel that the organization could not be left to her as her personal fief. Bahuguna even went to the extent of standing in line with his wife Kamala at the airport in Allahabad, when Mrs Gandhi visited the Kumbh Mela on 14 January. When she did see them, however, she just turned her face away.

* * *

Had Mrs Gandhi not revealed her changed attitude to P. N. Haksar, in such unequivocal terms, it would not have been possible for one of her close confidants to take him by the scruff of his neck and warn him "not to make insinuations against Sanjay, Maruti, or any one of the family ever again!"

The apparent charge against Haksar, however, had been that he was strengthening his bureaucratic powers, taking even the ministers for granted, and making the prime minister's secretariat the hub of political and administrative decision-making. The fall from favour came later, when he entered into conflict with the PM over Sanjay and Maruti. He had thought himself close enough to the PM to be able to advise her that Sanjay would have to be kept in check and Maruti wound up. Haksar had obviously not realized that this was like touching a hot iron. He was singed badly. I was told at that time that Haksar opposed Maruti because his own land fell into the area which was taken over by Bansi Lal as factory premises.

Haksar, thus, lost his job.

"Anybody who disagreed was quietly put on the shelf," observes a Congressman who still retains his regard for Haksar as an honest, clear-headed, and loyal person. What is surprising is a comment in typical homespun language from Sita Ram Kesri, the organization chief in Bihar who played a crucial role in giving Sanjay his first political boost. "I'm very much opposed to Haksar, but he has a number one brain. He has intellectual calibre. Being a leftist he could still point the rightist way if needed." I am not sure if Haksar would take that as a compliment. But he remained one of those figures—pointed out as an example by Congressmen—who illustrated Indira Gandhi's capacity to juggle with men of opinion, and not relent.

"I had something to do with softening her attitude on Haksar," says V. P. Sathe, member of the Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra and a vocal protagonist of the Congress Left. "But she would say, 'Well, he is angry, he must be angry with me!' Haksar would say, 'She doesn't trust me, what's the use!' She did bring him back eventually but once that rapport was broken, it was broken." The impact of mediation efforts to bring back the personal equation was again marginal.

* * *

Even during the emergency, however, Indira could not touch Chavan and Jagjivan Ram, the iron men in her cabinet. When she did, it was she who got singed, for it was Jagjivan Ram's revolt that brought her tumbling down. The politicians she created—Dinesh Singh, Gujral, Bahuguna, and others—were those she had managed to throw out at will. The others, whose support was unassailable, she tried to neutralize in cleverer ways. Her biggest gamble, the most finely calculated one, was over the Syndicate; she risked a split in the party while the presidential election over Giri became almost like a referendum, and she could throw out such stalwarts as Morarji Desai, Kamaraj, S. Nijalingappa, Atulya Ghosh, and S. K. Patil. The battle within the group supporting her was of another kind. At a time when her power was supreme and she could afford it, she denuded even Chavan of his potential for rivalry. She took away the intelligence agencies from the home ministry, and revenue intelligence and banking from finance. As Bahuguna said soon after she announced the elections and Jagjivan Ram left the Congress, "What remains of the finance ministry except the finance minister? It is Babuji's (Jagjivan Ram's) action now which has provided some engagement to Brahmananda Reddy. She has surrounded herself with pygmies and nobody can do a giant's job."

"Indiraji was surrounded by mediocre advisers," admitted Kesri, the staunch loyalist, who otherwise affirms that "nothing would make him leave Indiraji in this difficulty. Even the chief ministers were third rate people."

"Maybe she prefers third rate people to be able to control them better?" I asked.

"But do they remain under control? A strong man is an asset, not a weakness. A man of character who knows his party—he'll stand by you, not the weak ones."

Indira Gandhi thought Chavan had let her down in 1969 by not giving her spontaneous support at Bangalore over the Giri issue. She tried hard, thereafter, to cut him off from his base in Maharashtra, which was the source of his strength. But Jagjivan Ram?

"Don't speak till I know who's going to win," D. P. Mishra advised him in 1966 in the battle for leadership between her and Morarji Desai. But as soon as she won and the cabinet was being formed, there came a wail from Jagjivan Ram.

"*Ustad!*" he cried out, using his favourite term for Mishra, "I am being humiliated. She's giving me labour and the rank is low."

"*Guru*," consoled Mishra, using the appelation he habitually used for Ram, "now the circumstances are changed. Let it be."

"Have I sunk so low in your eyes as well?" Jagjivan Ram was so upset that Mishra rang Mrs Gandhi and induced her to change the ministry and discard the system of ranking in favour of the alphabetical order.

"Their differences came when Jagjivan Ram became Congress president and wanted to retain both offices," said Mishra. "That was the beginning of her distrust."

"The Congress Party at the Centre was united emotionally under Pandit Nehru," said Tarkeshwari Sinha, a young, attractive, deputy finance minister in Nehru's cabinet, who was Mrs Gandhi's most vociferous opponent within the party for a number of years. "But in the states there were strong group affiliations. The question of Morarji replacing Nehru never arose and there was a consensus on Shastri. By the time Mrs Gandhi came we had become loyal supporters of Morarji. When he lost we stuck to him. I don't mind admitting publicly that we brought groupism into the Centre. But Mrs Gandhi was very amiable. I was such a vocal opponent of hers, but she never interfered in the elections of the Congress parliamentary party—the very fact that I got such an overwhelming majority showed that she didn't interfere. But in September, the power play to oust her began. She got information that at the Congress parliamentary board meeting they were going to pass a resolution asking for a vote of confidence, but Kamaraj didn't turn up in the end. She became scared from then on. That's when she started operating the levers of power and sought control of the party machinery as well."

In 1969, Jagjivan Ram stood strongly on Indira's side when the rest of the Congress leadership joined together to form the Syndicate and forced a party split. He was her defence minister during the war over Bangladesh, sharing perhaps some of her finest hours. But the collaboration remained an unsettled one. In fact, it was anticipated that she would use the power of her great electoral victory in 1971 to finally drop Jagjivan Ram from the cabinet. But she was too astute and too wary. Jagjivan Ram had an estimated support of eighty members of parliament; if he chose to withdraw his backing, it would leave her massive majority depleted—from 361 in a house of 524, to a mere 281. She stuck on to him, but steadily began undercutting his influence in Bihar—propping alternate leaders who could command support amongst the Harijans—and gradually brought about a situation where almost every known friend or supporter of Jagjivan Ram knew that he could get a ticket, an office, or sinecure only at the cost of a *volte-face* in her favour.

Jagjivan Ram tried but could not match Mrs Gandhi's consummate manipulative skills. It was not as if he sat quietly waiting for the axe to fall. But, as he says, "I am not a moralist, I am a politician and (had) to keep my silence."

But the judgement of 12 June 1975 brought the issue out into the open. He probably thought he could beat her at her own game. Jagjivan Ram certainly did not sit in silence that day at 1 Safdarjang Road where the entire Congress leadership had converged, betraying varying moods of fear, doubt, trepidation, or confident fervour. He kept reiterating all through for every one to hear, "She's the leader, judgement or no judgement." She knew his stand would be crucial. At 12.30 pm, when people began moving out, she called Jagjivan Ram aside. "*Aap zara ruk jaiye* (Please stay back for a while)." He assured her of his support.

On 16 June P. N. Singh, a Delhi-based politician belonging to Chandra Shekhar's group and member of the metropolitan council, visited Jagjivan Ram. The Congress parliamentary party was to meet on 18 June to decide what to do. "You people must do something!" Singh exclaimed, "otherwise the party will finish."

"Age or health doesn't now permit me to, but if Chandra Shekhar takes the lead, I'll support him," answered Ram.

"We had talked to seventy MPs by then," said P. N. Singh. "If Babuji had come in with his eighty, we would have got even more to join us and ask for her resignation."

Chandra Shekhar himself had certain reservations. To begin with, he didn't believe Jagjivan Ram! The latter had promised support on various issues at various times, but had not come forward at the actual moment. However, there was a finer ethical point about which Chandra Shekhar was very conscious. "I don't want to join issue with Mrs Gandhi on the court decision. I want to do it on the basis of policy and economic issues."

Jagjivan Ram endorsed the party decision in favour of Indira Gandhi staying on, and moved with the majority in parliament supporting her. But he was also very clear that in the event of electing an interim prime minister, it should not be Swaran Singh or Kamlapati Tripathi (whom Mrs Gandhi felt safer with), but he, Jagjivan Ram, the seniormost minister, who should be the obvious choice. The question ultimately never arose, but Mrs Gandhi did not forget what she thought had amounted to another act of perfidy on his part.

Then, on 26 June 1975, came the emergency.

When he was called to a cabinet meeting at 6 am at the prime minister's residence, Jagjivan Ram was told, like the rest of his cabinet colleagues, that the emergency had been imposed; opposition leaders, and even Chandra Shekhar, had been arrested. He returned home to 6 Krishna Menon Marg to find the red feathers in BSF berets glowing in the sun all around his house, and CID personnel stationed outside. They were moving around inside too, and his personal and official staff were all dead scared. He was not under house arrest, but his movements were under surveillance. Bahuguna was one of the first to visit him. P. N. Singh's reaction on hearing of Chandra Shekhar's arrest was to ring "Babuji." "I thought he too might be arrested."

When he met him, Jagjivan Ram's eyes were full of tears. He spoke to him in Bhojpuri. "The democracy we have fought for is finished. The responsibility is on you young people now."

As a safeguard against any taperecording device, the telephone receiver had been kept off the hook.

Jagjivan Ram had lost the gamble. He realized that his resignation at that point would be taken as a gesture of protest and he too could be in jail. He was too old, and too much of a politician to risk that.

But that night in his diary he noted: This is a Black Day.

* * *

"SANJAY TOOK OVER on the 26th of June," affirmed Siddhartha Shankar Ray, at that time chief minister of West Bengal. "After that I was nowhere. I was out of touch, and out after the emergency. They didn't want her to be accessible to anyone."

"But you were in favour of the emergency," I pointed out to him.

"Yes, but I wanted it only for three months. Before it was declared the PM had had numerous reports that showed the law and order situation was very grave. To me it seemed obvious that the emergency should be there for a short period and to be used only for the purpose of bringing back sanity to the country. But soon after we were completely out of the picture."

The fifty-seven years old Siddhartha Shankar Ray, grandson of the great C. R. Das, had three generations of friendship with the Nehrus, along with a common political background in the Congress behind him. Till 25 June, in fact, he was still one of the few who could meet "Indira"—as he called her—not only as prime minister, but also as associate. Tall enough to tower over most people, and with a slight stoop, the big-built, bespectacled Ray had the easy confidence of a man of talent and affluence. He is a barrister, and so is his wife, Maya Ray, also till then a member of parliament. The two of them could chat animatedly over meals in the Gandhi home with a happy sense of familiarity.

Siddhartha Shankar Ray's admiration for Indira Gandhi as a political leader was genuine, and as he said later, "We almost worshipped her." But he did not mince words when occasion demanded, at least till the year 1974. He felt that Bansi Lal held Sanjay in his clutches by having manoeuvred to get him the land he wanted for Maruti. But when he learnt more about the actual business he thought he should warn Indira. Apparently, they had a meeting. Sanjay was present. Ray listed one, two, three, four points and discussed them with the PM. He then turned to Sanjay.

"You shouldn't be doing this, its unethical," he said.

"But every businessman does it," remonstrated Sanjay.

"Every businessman is not the prime minister's son or Nehru's grandson."

The reference to Nehru could not have appealed to Sanjay, for he does not hold sacred his grandfather's ideas. But then his later attitudes betray much the same lack of consideration towards the opinions of some of his mother's colleagues. And those of his mother too. "She was perfectly rational," analyzed a top official, "but as soon as it came to Maruti and Sanjay, she would just clam up."

In 1974, however, Siddhartha Shankar Ray did not suffer for having voiced his opinions on Sanjay's activities, unlike Haksar who had, earlier. The family connection was too strong, as were also, till then, the Left alignments in the party in favour of the Satpathy-Yadav-Ray-Barooah combine. Also, Jayaprakash Narayan's movement was raising its hydra head and it was necessary to keep party colleagues in a cooperative frame of mind, and at her side. At this point Mrs Gandhi could not afford to disregard the compulsions of democratic sanction within the party, even if she had finally decided to shake off her leftist dream.

In her dealings with Chandra Shekhar, Mrs Gandhi invariably remained evasive on ideological issues. Soon after she had established her tremendous rapport with the masses in 1971 with the *Garibi Hatao* (Remove Poverty) slogan that caught on like a highpowered sales campaign, she called Chandra Shekhar.

"We must do great things for the country. If you cooperate, we can do a lot. I want your cooperation," she said.

"Of course," said Chandra Shekhar. "I'm a member of the party. I am ready to do what you want."

But nothing more was said.

After some time she called him again.

"Something has to be done for the poor!" she exclaimed. "We must redeem our pledge to the people. Why don't you draw up a plan?"

He took her seriously enough. He prepared a detailed note on various aspects which he thought could be tackled urgently, and handed it in to her.

Once again she said, "You must cooperate with me, then we can go ahead."

No further action was taken on the note.

Chandra Shekhar was both upset and perplexed. But another politician friend of his laughed.

"You think she meant it? She just wanted to know if you wanted to be a minister. She was giving you the opportunity to say so."

Chandra Shekhar's disillusionment began to set in when he found her entire tone changed after 1971. Things became especially clear in her address to the Indian Chambers of Commerce on 10 April that year, where she argued for a better understanding with the private sector.

She was mild and compromising in her approach. "There is always scope for an honest difference of opinion regarding the wisdom and otherwise of particular polices," said Mrs Gandhi. "But mutual recriminations do not take us far. As good democrats, we all have to function within a common framework which has the support of the people." Her tone was equally mild when she went on to talk about imbalances in the economy, the expansion of government investment in the economic structure, or even when she urged industry "to share with the government the task of generating greater employment."

In a May editorial of his magazine *Young Indian*, Chandra Shekhar spelt this disappointment out in concrete and perceptible terms.

By 1972, he had become really cynical. They had had a spate of committee meetings in the housing ministry, when Gujral was minister of housing, on the tricky question of urban land ceiling. A meeting was then fixed in Finance Minister Y. B. Chavan's room in which the prime minister was also expected to be present. There was a telephone call from Chavan.

"You can make me sign on a blank paper," Chandra Shekhar said, "I'll accept even the minimum programme that you decide upon."

"You're very generous today," laughed Chavan.

"I know she doesn't mean to do it."

And sure enough, at the meeting after the discussions, when it came to finalizing the report, Mrs Gandhi turned around and said, "The Sardar (Swaran Singh) had very strong views on this. Let us consult him first."

"The poor Sardar wasn't there," recalls Chandra Shekhar, "nor had he interested himself in this. She again used it as an excuse."

Then came 12 June, the day of the judgement.

Before any information had actually come through that morning, Unnikrishnan feared what to him was the worst.

"I've heard disquieting news," he said to Barooah. "No, no, everything's alright," replied Barooah. "Gokhale and Rajni have said so."

Gokhale in fact had sent for Dhawan on the 10th and the 11th to find out where S. C. Khare their advocate was. "He should be present at the time of the judgement. In case anything goes wrong he can rush to Delhi and prefer an appeal and we can go to the supreme court." Siddhartha Shankar Ray was also in the room when Gokhale said this.

"I contacted the counsel," recalls Dhawan. "I felt that Mr Gokhale suspected that the judgement was going to be against us. He was laying too much stress about the counsel being present. I did not convey my feeling to the PM. I only told her what he had said."

"Whatever he wants you do," she said, "but I am not going to appeal if I am defeated. Have you made any arrangements to find out as soon as it comes?"

"I have told Jagpat Dubey in Allahabad. He'll ring up," replied Dhawan.

In fact the very day of 12 June 1975 did not augur well for Mrs Gandhi. The prime minister was up as usual at 6 am at her house in Safdarjang Road. She was planning to wash, dress, and be ready to face the world by 8 am, when at 6.30 am she got the news that D. P. Dhar had died. He had been ill and in Govind Vallabh Pant Hospital. She was almost the first of the top leaders to get there.

When she returned, she went through the daily ritual of meeting the people in the adjoining house at 1 Akbar Road. At 9.30 she was back again and preparing to go to office. There was no commotion, no fear, and no anxious moments with regard to the impending judgement.

Gokhale rang Dhawan at 9.45 to let him know as soon as the news came through.

"At two minutes past ten, Sharada Prasad rang Seshan in the office on the Rex phone (direct line), and told him she had been unseated," recalls Dhawan. "In the meanwhile, somebody brought in the ticker tape also. The PM was in her room, so was Rajiv. He was the first to be informed. The news was broken to her by him. Sanjay was in his factory."

As they all began to go towards the inner side, Dhawan saw Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Gokhale and D. K. Barooah walking in. She was standing in front.

"Everything alright?" called out Ray with his usual familiarity.

"Yes," she replied. "They have unseated me! What steps do I take now? Do I have to resign immediately?"

All four huddled into a separate room.

"What are the charges?" shouted somebody. There was a rush towards the ticker which was in the room across the porch. Here, it was Yashpal Kapoor frantically ringing various people he knew in the different states, urging them to issue statements in her favour. The APHLC Chief Minister Williams A. Sangma was the first to come out with a statement endorsing her leadership. When Barooah rang him he said, "Yes, yes, Kapoor has already spoken to me. I've already given the statement."

"Did you meet her that day?" I asked Kapoor.

"No. Personally I was against the thought of her resignation. I didn't have to ask her what to do. I would have done it anyway," he said.

What he did was to unleash a publicity campaign with the organizational energy of a dynamo. He called in his Campaign Committee members and got them working at break-neck speed. He had one of the most effective posters out by 2 o'clock that afternoon. "*Inki larai, hamari larai* (Her struggle is our struggle)." He gathered 300 volunteers, teachers, retail traders, students, housewives, advocates, MPs, and writers at the office of the campaign committee in the afternoon, and had six lakh leaflets, divided into 2000 leaflets in each bag, distributed by them in the next few days.

"I don't remember Sanjay saying anything to me that day," said Kapoor.

But the next day when he went to see Mrs Gandhi, she took him aside and said: "Kapoor, people don't like your coming here, so you better lessen it from now on."

As simple as that. There had been resentments against his role, his person, his functioning, his morals, and even his integrity. She had withstood them all, for his loyalty to her had been unquestioned. At last even he had come under a shadow. It was time for a new order.

"Yes," replied Kapoor to Mrs Gandhi. "I've only to discuss one thing with you. Then I'll go."

After that he would go to the PM's house to inform her of various happenings, but he saw to it that there weren't too many people around—at lunch for instance, or late in the evening. He would talk to her for a brief minute or two and come away. It was a one-way effort, for she never asked him to do anything thereafter.

"Didn't you ask her what had happened to change her attitude or to make her distrust you?" I inquired.

"No," said Kapoor, answering with all the blind loyalty of a man from the Frontier. "I had accepted her on a much higher plane than even a boss. I've never questioned her."

He did point out to me, however, that contrary to the reports she had been given that he had spoilt her election case, the day after his evidence had been published in the papers on the basis of his marathon appearance in the Allahabad high court for two whole days, both Siddhartha Shankar Ray and Palkhivala had come to his room "to congratulate me on my performance."

There was also somebody else who was berated on 12 June inside the PM's house. It was Haksar, by no less a person than Barooah himself. It was Haksar's evidence that had spoilt the case Barooah was arguing away. But his first reaction, as he went in to see the PM with Ray and Gokhale when she was talking of resigning, was to say something like, "It may appear graceful, after all. It may be only for a temporary period. We'll appeal, we're sure to win."

Barooah was among the first to leave. He went home and called a number of MPs. There were one or two general secretaries of the Congress as well, but it was to some members from Assam to whom he said, "I might well be the PM."

"Yes, we went to Barooah's house," said Unnikrishnan. "But no meeting can ever take place there, its always a continuing dialogue. In fact, I suggested that she should not have time to have second thoughts. I thought JP's movement in Bihar had fascist overtones. I strongly suspected CIA involvement. I took it as a political challenge. I thought she should continue and we should convene a meeting to endorse this."

At 10.45 am the stay order was announced. Siddhartha Shankar Ray came into the room and read it out. Suddenly the tension unwound. India's entire ruling elite gathered there broke into subdued chatter. They had been hearing that the judgement might go against Mrs Gandhi, but they hadn't believed it.

Sanjay had meanwhile rushed back from his factory, and was around, "darting in and out," like his mother.

"The stay order is there. We have to think about it. Why should you resign?" Sanjay is reported to have told his mother.

According to Dhawan, everybody who came said, "There's no question of her resigning."

Dhawan himself was involved in another kind of exercise after the stay order had been granted. He was taking down the text of a draft being finalized for senior leaders, who were to issue a statement supporting Mrs Gandhi's continuance in office. They were working at the draft in the dining room, away from the crowded anterooms, and each minister coming in was giving his suggestions.

But there was no sign of Chavan. There were whispers about the possible significance of his absence on such an occasion. Was he planning something? Was he keeping his options open? Did he want her to resign? He had stood by her all these years—except once, at the Bangalore meeting of the Congress working committee on 10 July 1969, when he had voted against her wishes, in favour of Sanjeeva Reddy, the presidential candidate. Did Chavan's absence now imply that he was not with her any more? Mrs Gandhi was beginning to have doubts.

Chavan, in fact, had gone to see the arrangements regarding the body of D. P. Dhar, which was to lie in state in Delhi, to be flown to his home in Srinagar that evening. Chavan returned home to 5 Race Course Road at 10 am, only to have a man rush in and tell him that the PM's election had been set aside. He just sat down. He could not imagine what this was going to imply. He did not think he had to rush to Mrs Gandhi immediately, as if to offer condolences. He just needed time to think. Finally, at 11.30 am, he decided to go to Safdarjang Road and find out what was happening. It was only when he reached there that he realized his absence had led to all kinds of speculation.

When he walked into the dining room, however, the text of the draft was nearly ready. But Inder Gujral saw it, remarked that it was "too anaemic," and re-drafted it. Everybody then signed in Dhawan's presence, the first to do so being Jagjivan Ram and Chavan.

"By noon, the situation was very clear," recalls Yunus. "She was not going to resign."

Sanjay appeared cool on the surface, but was molten lava inside. This was the day his experience of political campaigning was going to be fully realized. I think he felt he owed it to his mother to bolster her strength at this moment and make up for all those times when she had borne the brunt for Maruti. He was determined to organize such massive support for her that it would leave no question in anybody's mind about the direction of popular will. If Kapoor was running his publicity campaign with customary zest, Sanjay undertook to organize the people. He went forth into the city, and the city began to pour into 1 Safdarjang Road. Like Akbar Road, Krishna Menon Marg, Teen Murti, Race Course, and Sardarjang Road, which converged upon the roundabout near the PM's house, the people too converged upon it from various directions in Delhi and outside. The first of these rallies, to set the precedent for the next few weeks, had 2000 Congress volunteers crying their throats hoarse at 2 pm that afternoon. And as on many occasions to follow, the prime minister—still very much the prime minister—addressed them briefly. Sanjay looked on cooly, and when cornered by newsmen to give his reactions about the judgement, thought automatically of the technical rather than the emotional aspect: "The officer (Yashpal Kapoor) submitted that he had resigned. It was for the court to accept it or reject it."

It was not on this day only that Mrs Gandhi found a saviour in her son. It was for what he did between then and 25 June, the momentum he built up with public reaction, whose popular pressure made it possible for a disputable stand to turn into an indisputable fact—her claim to power. By noon, the Congress leadership had signed statements, issued appeals, affirmed faith in Mrs Gandhi, and ratified all this in a meeting that evening. The immediate threat to her position was not just staved off. It was not there anymore. The only signs that were, suggested the hope that she might step down, but never that there existed a will to force her resignation. If she was convinced about handing in her resignation, nothing could have stopped her. Her own offers to resign were just feelers, I think, to see how her colleagues felt. How she treated them subsequently was based very much on their reactions that day itself.

But even Mrs Gandhi could not possibly suspect that the mild-mannered Sardar Swaran Singh could organize opinion against her, in his favour, and at her cost. His ambitions were fanned because of the misconception that she would resign. But she never forgave him this. However, she was more wary with Barooah, because of the leftist design behind it all, apprehending that he could be the focal point for an opportune revolt. Nor did Mrs Gandhi trust Jagjivan Ram.

That evening there was only one topic being discussed in the central hall of parliament.

"What's the harm if she steps down gracefully? The only person who can fill in is Babuji. Or have an election."

Jagjivan Ram's supporters were sure that he would win. They even began canvassing, but could not muster up enough strength. By next day, the slogan being shouted was *Stay or no stay, Mrs Gandhi Stays*! But there were moves to find viable, temporary, or permanent alternatives. Mrs Gandhi to remain till the supreme court granted an additional stay while the case could be referred to the supreme court for final judgement, Mrs Gandhi to step down temporarily till the supreme court decision, or Mrs Gandhi to step down altogether? As in 1967, almost eight momentous years back, the moves kept floundering against two seemingly permanent rocks in the Congress organization—the lack of enough options in leadership choice and the lack of confidence itself. Jagjivan Ram had said he would not take the lead, but could support Chandra Shekhar. Chandra Shekhar had qualms about political propriety. The Left, largely because of Mrs Gandhi, and despite her fears, was divided.

"At that time, we thought the party would split," observed Sathe. "None of us felt convinced that the judgement had any substance."

"When Panditji (Jawaharlal Nehru) wanted to resign once, Congressmen got so jittery because they thought without him the Congress would be nothing," recalled Yunus. "Her resigning at that stage would have meant yielding to a judgement which everybody felt was wrong."

But like Dhawan, who stated that "everybody who came that day (to the PM's house) *said* she should not resign," Chandra Shekhar said that "everybody who went that day *felt* she should resign, even those who said she shouldn't."

Then why didn't they speak out?

Perhaps the most realistic observation comes from an old stalwart of the Congress in Delhi, who has seen the vicissitudes in the national political scene since 1919 when he first joined the Congress, who has invoked fun at his own cost for his absentmindedness, but who has retained sufficient popularity to have been, at the age of seventy-three, the chief executive councillor of the Delhi administration, a position equivalent to the rank of a state chief minister. Radha Raman was in Srinagar the day of the judgement. His own behaviour was typical of the rest.

"I got to know at 11 am from the news on radio. My first reaction was one of shock. Then I couldn't decide whether it would be good for her to resign or continue. I was in the process of contemplation."

That did not prevent him from sending a telephonic message to Delhi which read: "Mrs Indira Gandhi's leadership is indispensable for the country at this crucial juncture." Like other Congressmen, he needed time to think. But also like them, when he reached Delhi, he was swept away by the heady mixture of stage-managed rallies, by sycophants who could breathe only the air of power, and by genuine enthusiasts, all of them saying "*rehna hai, rehna hai* (she must stay, she must stay)."

"So the stage of contemplation was over," remarked Radha Raman with a whimsical shrug. "Fifty per cent were definitely overwhelmed by the opinion that existed and was created. Others were apprehensive about the party's dismemberment. What is democracy, after all? If eighty per cent feel one way, what should the twenty per cent do? Either they go out or express themselves in a feeble voice!"

Like a typical old timer, *Dada*, as he is known among politicians, journalists, and friends, is a sentimentalist. He was convinced that if Mrs Gandhi had asked Jagjivan Ram to take over for a while, "she would have won him over completely and he would have been at her feet."

"But she didn't trust anyone, he continued. "If she didn't have faith in her council of ministers or in him, then. . . ."

"No," said P. N. Singh, another younger, more realistic Congressman. "She would never have been able to come back to power if she had given it up at that time. She was right in her assessment. Nobody would have let her return."

Karan Singh, then union minister for health and family planning in Mrs Gandhi's cabinet, and former maharajah of Kashmir, is a handsome idealist of forty-six. A Sanskrit scholar, poet and musician he was one of the first to voluntarily give up, after independence, one of the richest privy purses apportioned to the Indian princes. With this background of a confident and detatched political life behind him, it was perhaps understandable that he would be one Congressman to voice a frank opinion. He wrote to her. "You can offer to resign," he suggested, "Let the president decide."

"Many of us felt that way," he added. "The question was not of legality. In politics it is more a political, even a moral question. The 12th of June was really an ominous day in her life. It explains the shift, as in a rifle. A slight deviation and you find another direction altogether. In the Upanishads they say there are always two paths, and there is always a moment of choice. Her not resigning led to everything that happened thereafter."

On 13 June, when Gujral asked Chandra Shekhar for his views on the prime ministerial predicament, the latter answered: "The days of Mrs Gandhi being a democratic leader are over. Now she will have to be a dictator."

"There was not much preparation for the emergency," observes R. K. Dhawan. "Ministers, members of parliament, groups and individuals visited the PM's house as usual on 23 and 24 June and passed general comments on the situation; 'Madame,' they said, 'there is too much chaos. Something should be done.'" On the 24th, Dev Kanta Barooah and Siddhartha Ray expressed themselves in categorical terms about the need for firm action. That afternoon, on the same day, came the supreme court judgement on Mrs Gandhi's appeal for an absolute stay.

The Vacations Judge Mr V. R. Krishna Iyer's hyperbolic turns of phrase could not cover the starkness of his conclusion. "The halls of justice must be informed, to some extent, by the great verity that the broad sweep of human history is guided by sociological forces beyond the ken of the noisy hour or the quirk of legal nicety. Life is larger than the law," said His Lordship and then pronounced Mrs Gandhi half guilty. She could stay on as prime minister and exercise her functions in that capacity in parliament as long as she remained prime minister or minister during the pendency of her appeal in the supreme court against the judgement of the Allahabad high court. As a member of the Lok Sabha, however, Indira Gandhi had lost her right to vote, to participate in the proceedings of the house, or even to draw her remuneration.

There was once again a stunned hush at the prime minister's house. The leaders went grim-faced and silent, filed into Mrs Gandhi's room like a line of mourners, but came out smiling. The people outside brightened when she came and spoke to them. There was no suspense, as on 12 June. "We have lost the battle but we have won the war," Barooah had said then, and on the 18th, at the meeting of the Congress parliamentary party, he had come out with his famous statement: "India is Indira, Indira is India." Chavan had not lagged far behind, though his phrase did not catch on as much: "What happens to her happens to India and what happens to India happens to her," he said. The decision that she should remain prime minister even if she got a conditional stay was made by her senior colleagues as early as 15 June. They had even taken into account the opposition threats to create a deadlock in parliament and decided that parliament could be called into session after the supreme court's final verdict which was not expected to take more than six weeks.

By the 25th, all the moves against her in the Congress, behind its obvious unctuous face, had proved infructuous. The opposition was jubilant about Justice Iyer's verdict. The joint meeting of the executives of the opposition parties stated bitingly: "Mrs Gandhi's credibility stands destroyed. Her membership of the Lok Sabha is restricted. Her right to vote is suspended. What kind of a prime minister can she be?" The Communist Party of India on the other hand came out with a strong plea that "she should not surrender to the blackmail of Right reaction—and remain prime minister."

If the opposition was on the warpath, there were, within the Congress too, rumblings of criticism about the way the rallies were being organized, of the use of state transport, and of the vulgar ways in which crowds were displayed. "I was not so close to her, I had just about joined the Congress," said Tarkeshwari Sinha, "I thought I should still be a back bencher. I had been a known opponent of Mrs Gandhi. But even I had the courage to say about all those women doing *bhangra* and all outside. 'This is so silly,' I said to her. 'You're precious to us, it's up to your secretariat to see that nothing undignified should happen.' I thought it would be too cheeky to say much more," she remarked. But the fact was that Indira Gandhi was not only enjoying these rallies, she admired the way her son had helped in organizing them. She thought the people's will, so obviously expressed in her favour, would teach a lesson or two to those who were opposing her. Certainly, if she herself had been sensitive to the style of these public demonstrations, she would never have acted as swiftly and ruthlessly as she did in the matter of Nirmal Kumar Mukherjee, her home secretary.

Dhawan, her aide, says that "the word emergency had not emerged as such even by the morning of 25 June." But the way N. K. Mukherjee was relieved of his vital charge and shifted to the ministry of tourism and civil aviation on 22 June itself, suggests that serious steps had been contemplated very early. Sanjay was very much in the picture, and the style of punishment exercised during the emergency was already being initiated with regard to the highest official authorities. The immediate provocation was a call by Home Minister Brahmananda Reddy to the home secretary, saying that the transport provided by the New Delhi municipal committee and the Delhi state transport corporation for taking people to the roundabout near Safdarjang Road, to stage rallies in support of the PM, was attracting adverse attention, almost to the point of becoming scandalous. The home secretary should take steps to have this stopped, suggested Reddy.

Mukherjee immediately called a meeting of the five top officers of the home ministry who generally deal with such matters—Additional Secretary T. C. A. Srinivasvardhan, CBI Chief Anant Jayaram, Intelligence Bureau Director D. Sen, and special secretary of the ministry of home affairs—former director general of the BSF, K. F. Rustomji. Mukherjee placed the instructions of the home minister before the meeting for their opinion. Almost all agreed that the process of arranging the demonstrations was indeed scandalous, but that this was a matter entirely within the jurisdiction of the Delhi administration, and that it should best be dealt with by Lieutenant Governor Kishan Chand. The only person who was not categorical about this was Sen, who kept humming and hawing.

There is an extremely interesting sidelight to this situation. Home Minister Reddy had already been pushed into the background by Om Mehta, his minister of state, in the exercise of influence with the prime minister—or Sanjay Gandhi. Both Mukherjee and Rustomji expressed the feeling that if the instructions of the home minister were conveyed to the lieutenant governor, *he would undoubtedly not carry them out*. The meeting then arrived at a consensus which suggested this view be conveyed to the home minister, and that the proper course for him would be to tell Om Mehta, the minister of state for home affairs, to speak to the lieutenant governor, because they felt that if the latter could be persuaded to point out that the use of these vehicles was to the disadvantage of the government and the prime minister, Kishan Chand would listen. This was, accordingly, conveyed to the home minister. Om Mehta did speak to the lieutenant governor and the use of the vehicles was discontinued.

At this point, nobody except the home minister and the five officials of his ministry knew anything about this meeting having taken place. Yet each detail of the discussions and who said what was conveyed to the prime minister as well as to Sanjay Gandhi. Srinivasvardhan was tipped at the time to be home secretary after Mukherjee, who was expected to become cabinet secretary, being the seniormost ICS officer after B. D. Pande, who was due to retire. D. Sen did not get on well with either of them, and felt, probably, that his own days as the IB boss would be numbered after they took over. It was speculated that he probably thought it best to ensure his own position by currying favour with Sanjay and the prime minister.

Apparently, there were the same motivations which made Lieutenant Governor Kishan Chand complain to both about his helplessness in the matter of dealing with the *dharnas* outside Rashtrapati Bhavan. "What can I do, the home secretary doesn't listen!" he is reported to have exclaimed. "Mukherjee says what's the use of removing these people; there are crowds gathering even outside the PM's house all the time. He says they (the opposition) won't be there for long and also, the president is not even here."

The lieutenant governor did not have to consult the home ministry to remove those participating in the *dharnas*. It was in his jurisdiction. But it was his practice to either consult them or keep them informed of the actions being contemplated against prominent leaders of the opposition. Whether the lieutenant governor talked to the home secretary or not, it seems he certainly informed Sanjay Gandhi in the evening that day that the home secretary was dragging his feet in the matter or was averse to taking any action. Overnight, on the 21st, S. L. Khurana, the chief secretary of Rajasthan, was called to Delhi. On the 22nd he was appointed home secretary, N. K. Mukherjee was sent off to the tourism ministry, and Srinivasvardhan was back to his home cadre of Madhya Pradesh shortly after, as chairman of the board of revenue in Gwalior.

At 11 am on the 25th morning, when Siddhartha Ray saw the prime minister, she showed him a sheaf of reports about the situation in the country. "In her assessment," said Ray, "something had to be done."

He came away, but went back at 4 pm with a lot of books and the Constitution of India. That's when they talked about the emergency. "Does the law permit it?" she asked Ray. "Yes," he replied. "It does permit a second emergency." They both went to the president, who had also seen a number of reports. He agreed within fifteen minutes. Back at the PM's house, "only P. N. Dhar and the home secretary were there," according to Dhawan. The letter had to be drafted to be sent to the president, suggesting the promulgation of emergency. Two lines would be drafted, and then Mrs Gandhi would read them out. "Why it was taking so long was that every five minutes Sanjay would come in from another room and say, 'Mummy, come for a minute,' and she would go," recalled Ray. Sanjay was busy ringing up chief ministers who happened to be in Delhi, or those in the state capitals, and would call his mother each time to talk to them.

By 6.30 that evening the phones were ringing hectically in select homes or offices of some of the northern states. The pattern was almost identical. The telephone would ring at the residence of the chief secretary, the home secretary, and the inspector general of police—"The chief minister wants you to attend an urgent meeting." In the office of the chief minister there would be an air of secrecy. "The emergency is being announced in the country and everybody in the opposition has to be rounded up. Wireless messages should be set to the DIGs in every division to round up the members of the RSS and the hard core of the Jan Sangh. The press should not get to know. Censorship should be imposed. They should be prevented from publishing any news relating to this round up."

"Why is this happening, sir?" an officer would ask.

"Because a situation has emerged where all institutions of government are threatened and widespread rebellion is likely to take place. If people are not arrested, we'll not be able to control the situation. Every collector and SP in the districts should be asked to remain in his station and not proceed anywhere on leave."

Wireless messages were sent out immediately to every district in India. Police went to the various newspaper presses and in some cases destroyed the galleys of stories filed in, so that there could be no papers in the morning. The editors started ringing up. Except the top three or four officers, neither the police nor the administration knew what was going on. None of those involved, either in the districts or in the state capitals, slept that night.

At the PM's house, the draft to be sent to the president was finally ready. It was then signed by Home Minister Brahmananda Reddy. The emergency came into force at 11.20 when the president signed his consent.

The members of the union cabinet did not know. Chavan, for instance, worked till late that night. He read the speeches, which were coming on the ticker, of JP and the others at the mammoth opposition rally at the Ram Lila grounds that evening. He did not know exactly what JP had said, but it looked bad. He felt uneasy. At 4.30 in the morning, there was a call. An unfamiliar voice asked: "May I speak to Mr Chavan?"

"Chavan here."

"I just wanted to see if you were there," said the voice and put the phone down.

Chavan could not sleep after that. At 5 am there was a call from the home secretary, saying that there would be a cabinet meeting at 6 am. Soon after there was another call, this time from a friend, to say that JP had been arrested. Within minutes came another about Morarji. Then about Chandra Shekhar. At 6 when Chavan reached the PM's house, he knew about the arrests—but no more.

Mrs Gandhi was naturally grave as she looked at the ministers of her government who had been rushed out of their beds at that unlikely hour. She had not trusted them enough to have consulted them on the step she had taken. It would have been too risky in case one of them raised an objection. She took about ten or fifteen minutes to explain why she had already had the emergency imposed in the country. Swaran Singh turned to the home secretary, not to her, and asked mildly whether it could not have been avoided. Nobody else spoke. There was a stillness in their hearts. As Chavan gazed at the woman who had led them through the conflicts and vicissitudes of the times, with whom they had had their clashes but to whom they had also given their loyalty, he felt as if he had been plunged suddenly into "an endless tunnel of darkness. . . ."

They did not know what had been going on in the PM's house the evening before—who had been there, how the decision was taken. But in the midst of that hectic activity Sanjay's behaviour had given a hint to those who were present, of the shape of things to come. He had wanted to instruct the chief ministers, at least of the northern states he knew well, to lock up the high courts and cut off the electricity in all newspaper offices. Ray says he protested seriously to him, there was an altercation, and Sanjay began shouting: "You don't know how to run the country . . . !"

* * *

"I got on to the train on the 25th night at Lucknow and reached Delhi at 7.25 am. Everything was normal. I took a cab and came home. The streets were quiet, the taxis were there at the station. The only thing was there were no papers at Ghaziabad where I always take them. The first thing I did was to go to Chandra Shekhar's house in South Avenue Lane. I was told he had been arrested, along with Jayaprakash Narayan. What a shock! Why him, I wondered. He's a Congressman. He was my kind. He spoke my language. I couldn't understand what was happening."

Chandra Pratap Narain Singh, ex-MLA and forty-two-year-old scion of the Padrauna family in eastern UP, arrived that day in Delhi with all the fiery commitment of ideological honesty, and literally, in search of political idealism. His great-grandfather had had prestige and money enough to have employed Motilal Nehru as his lawyer in a famous case; his father had been a close friend and supporter of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai; and in 1969 he had himself made his debut in politics under Charan Singh by winning the assembly elections in UP as a member of the Bharatiya Kranti Dal. In 1971 he joined the Congress, to be caught—as squarely as most of the younger generation—by the charisma of Indira Gandhi.

C. P. N. Singh had come to Delhi to find out what he could do with his political future.

The news of the emergency was too sudden to deflect him from his purpose. On the 29th itself he called on Mohammad Yunus, whom he knew from Lucknow.

"Why don't you meet Mrs Gandhi?" Yunus advised, and helped him get the appointment.

On 3 July C. P. N. met the prime minister.

He was ebullient but forthright. "We have great hopes in you, but things must change. The people must be presented with a good, clean image of the party."

"How!" exclaimed the prime minister.

"By having a proper organization, a correct assessment of the work of ministers and chief ministers, and in the selection of candidates. I don't know Delhi or all-India politics but in UP it's all groupism. It isn't even enough if you belong to one group, of Kamlapatiji, Bahuguna, or K. C. Pant. You can get somewhere if you are backed by all, but you just have to hang around. Work is no criterion."

"It is very difficult to keep a check on that," remarked Mrs Gandhi.

"I've nothing to contribute there, I'd like to do some work entrusted to me here," C. P. N. ended up saying.

Mrs Gandhi looked at him quietly.

"You meet Sanjay tomorrow," she said.

"The beginning of the decline of the organizational base of the Congress was in 1969 when Radha Raman was made ad hoc president of the

Delhi Pradesh Congress committee," said Deep Chand Sharma, proud and fifty-six, an organizational man, former deputy leader of the Congress opposition in the Delhi corporation, and an elected member of the AICC for almost three decades. "Thakur Hukam Singh was elected, but I feel he was removed on the advice of the PM because he was Chaudhry Brahm Prakash's man. . . . With 1969 came the real test. Even people who were with her were suspect."

Originally, the Delhi Pradesh Congress committee had thirty elected members. By 1973 this number had grown to forty-five. Two years later there were 240 members, all nominated! After the emergency H. K. L. Bhagat, who was ad hoc president, became minister of state for works and housing, and another president was selected—Amar Nath Chawla.

"I was neither keen to become a member of an ad hoc committee, nor was I angling for a seat in parliament, but I wrote two notes to the PM about this whole business of not having organizational elections. I got no reply," said Sharma.

Then, within a month and a half, he learnt of what he calls a "smear campaign" against him for his "non-cooperation." Sharma thought of clearing his position. "Left alone," he said, "she is the most dynamic person in the country." But he was told that she was not handling Delhi affairs.

"Who then?" he had asked.

"Meet Sanjay," he was told.

"In September 1975 I was deputed to visit some districts of Rajasthan and UP to see how the implementation of the twenty point programme was going on. I came back and wrote in a report for the PM that vested interests were not allowing the distribution of land to landless labourers, and that there was no alternate source provided for villagers to get loans after giving them debt relief. It was delivered by hand at the PM's house, but there was no reply," said fifty-six-year-old Shiv Charan Gupta, an experienced Congressman from Delhi with a prestigious hold in the organization.

A fortnight later a meeting of chief ministers was called to discuss the setting up of rural banks and the distribution of land to landless labourers. But if this gave him some moral satisfaction, it did not boost his morale, for Gupta could only surmise that his letter may have been a contributory reason. After the exit of P. V. Narasimha Rao as general secretary of the Congress, the practice of getting these reports had been discontinued. Invitations for Congressmen kept coming in from various states but no facilities were extended by the All India Congress committee. Either they did not find the "right" people to review the programmes, or there was some hitch at the chief ministerial level to make finances available for these trips. However, there was no idea till then to associate youth workers at the grass-roots level.

"Then I wrote innumerable letters about slum clearance," says Gupta. "There was only one acknowledgement, from S. Haider of the prime minister's secretariat. Even the ministry concerned seemed to have no time to consider the matter. I asked the PM to give me some time. Nothing happened. Then I went to the ministry—nothing. Finally, when I understood that he was looking after it, I went to Sanjay Gandhi. . . ."

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal O. P. Mehra was *Chef de Mission,* leading the Indian contingent participating in the Montreal games in July 1976. Before the Indian hockey stars left for Montreal a month earlier, the air marshal presented the team to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. After their meeting with her it was suggested that they meet Sanjay Gandhi too.

"Certainly," complied the air marshal.

A retired chief of the naval staff asked to meet the prime minister to discuss with her the possibility of being given another assignment. Instead, he got an appointment with Sanjay Gandhi.

"We do not have anything for you at present," said the young man to the admiral. "But why don't you drop in occasionally whenever you come to Delhi? We might have something later."

"It might be a good idea if you keep in touch with him," confided an aide to the admiral.

"I met Sanjay first with Indiraji, when Narain Dutt Tiwari was being talked about as being the next chief minister of UP after Bahuguna resigned," said Chandrajit Yadav.

"What do you think of Tiwari as chief minister and Sheela Kaul as president of the PCC?" asked the PM.

"There are three points against Sheelaji," said Yadav. "She's a Brahmin, she's your aunt—and that'll be held against her—and she does not know enough people."

"Tiwari?"

"He was a good minister, but he is not a leader.

He's quite vague. We have functioned together in the assembly. We were both in the opposition, but I'd always argued on the basis of some ideas—he never did."

"No, no, he'll be good," interrupted Sanjay.

The PM agreed with Yadav. When the decisions were announced Sheela Kaul had not been made the president, but Tiwari was in as chief minister.

"Did you realize the level at which Sanjay was operating by then, and to what extent?" I asked Yadav.

"Of course," he replied, "we all knew. The chief ministers used to come and tell each one of us after meeting him what he had said and all."

"At what point would you say there was a distinct swing towards the Right?" I asked Radha Raman.

"With the judgement. There was nothing like that before. It was her reaction to the fear she had developed of those she had inducted, who had been card-holders. She came in with their help in 1969. Kept UP with their help. Bihar couldn't stand without the communists, and in Kerala there was a coalition. . . .

"Sanjay Gandhi came in with his own ideas. The boy was not experienced, he had no politics. He was a private sector owner, incensed by his own experience, who came out strongly with his opinions. At home, hearing the talk and the arguments all the time she could have been influenced; she is no diehard, she is mouldable."

"Do you think she used him as a sounding board?"

"Not directly. But I can say she was not unhappy."

"Why did you, a senior Congressman, make a special effort to give him prominence by inviting him to address the DPCC members and Delhi politicians?"

"The boy was good. He had good ideas. I liked his five points. Any young man, I thought, who belongs to the Nehru family, must be given his due. So I brought him. What he said was right; there should be no slogans, he said, and performance should be emphasized, but his style was too *teekha* (abrasive), *baat gale se guzarti nahin thee* (the words were so hard, one couldn't digest them)."

"Do you think he intended to create a power base of his own?"

"He didn't do anything on policy without consulting his mother. When the communists encouraged strikes, she would say 'they always make use of us.' That is the kind of thing that gave him the *sheh* (impetus) in the first place. It was Sanjay who rang up Zail Singh and other CMs to start the anti-communist wave. . . ."

Many members of parliament began to realize, as Sanjay grew more powerful, that Indira Gandhi was deliberately aiming to restore an ideological balance. Because she had been associated with a leftist stand, Sanjay's views could encourage the capitalist countries to think that Indira might readjust her priorities. They thought she was throwing out hints in all directions, on the presumption that what Sanjay and his set said would not offend the leftists; at the same time it would give hope to the rightists.

"Many of us felt we would have to make a choice between her and Sanjay, that we would be compelled to make a choice, as in 1969," remarked Margaret Alva the vivacious young member of the Rajya Sabha. "But we thought we should keep our views quiet, otherwise we would be marked anti-Sanjay. How could he have gained that stature without her? That was the conflict in my mind."

Margaret Alva was "blindly devoted," as she described it, to Indira Gandhi. She felt it was Indira who had presented a challenge to the younger generation by taking an anti-establishment stand in 1969. It was Indira who had stood up to the old coterie, carried the rank and file along with her progressive policies, and come to represent a new spirit in the Congress which was missing until then. It was this that had made Alva join the Congress at the time. She came to Delhi in 1976 "at the height of the challenge to the Congress," as she says, and she felt that she owed her politics to Mrs Gandhi directly, like the rest of the younger lot. "Mrs Gandhi was attractive, young, and gave the feeling to everybody that if you could somehow get to her and win her confidence, things were bound to happen," said Alva.

By July 1976, Margaret Alva did not know where to turn. She told Om Mehta once, "At least tell us, guide us. What are we supposed to do? Fight back?" But there was no guidance from the party, or from the prime minister. Some of the chief ministers from the south began going to her in despair.

"You're close to Delhi," they said. "You should know. Do we have to pay homage to Sanjay to keep the PM pleased?"

UMA VASUDEV

Dark Side of the Moon

A DETERMINED old man walked into Bangalore's jail one day in June 1976. He wanted to see Lal Krishan Advani, president of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, who was incarcerated there with a hundred other detenues since the bleak dawn of the emergency. When Advani appeared before him, the man saw a tall, slim, distinguished-looking and fair Sindhi, with very regular features, a moustache, and a quiet manner which gave nothing away.

"Well?" smiled Advani.

"I'm sixty-five," the man burst out. "I can't stand what she's doing. I've done whatever I wanted to. I've nothing more to live for. Tell me what to do. I'm prepared to die. I can go and shoot her. . . ."

"No," said Advani.

But the average worker inside the jails was getting impatient. There was a growing feeling that the leadership within was becoming complacent and that there were no plans towards a new move.

"You seem to think there's no need to do anything any more," complained Advani's companions in prison.

No authoritarian regime had been overthrown by violence, thought Advani. There was no alternative but to wait for the people to rise.

"There was so much anger against Indira Gandhi at the time. Do you think she might possibly have been assassinated then, or if she had managed to scrape back to power later?" I asked.

"Considering the extent to which she had gone, she might have, perhaps—had this been another country. But not in India. India is too big and it's not in the temper of the people; otherwise, it would have happened even earlier. Besides, the leadership of the political forces opposed to her is positively opposed to this kind of thing also. They disapprove of these measures. There is too strong a commitment to peace."

"Yet, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated."

"That was at a time soon after partition, when the entire country was inflamed. But an organized opposition, the organized forces now, for instance, are against this kind of solution to political problems. But she's always been saying this or felt it, like all dictators. She's accused us directly. The Jan Sangh was planning to murder me, she said. This was much earlier. Even then we felt that a person as responsible as a prime minister should not make a charge like that. So we met her about it, some of us. She wouldn't say anything. She would not substantiate the charge, nor resile. You can get out of it in a lot of ways if you want to. You can say, you know, that you were misquoted, or that two statements were juxtaposed and created the wrong impression, but she kept quiet. Perhaps she actually believed it, I don't know."

But assassination had been in the air, and in the prime minister's mind since L. N. Mishra's death in a bomb blast in January; an attempt on Chief Justice A. N. Ray's life some time later, and the fact that Morarji Desai had talked about it just a few hours before he was arrested on the fateful day of 25 June. "To get rid of a woman who is in power is more difficult than to get rid of a man being in power," he said to the correspondent of *L'Europeo*, an Italian newspaper. Desai gave a very graphic picture of the non-violent satyagraha they were planning to organize to achieve their objective, but he could not hide his anger, "We want to get rid of her, we want to force her to resign. . . . We will settle down and demand her resignation, shouting day and night. Even if the police arrests us, canes us, kills us. How many of us can they kill? And what will they do with the bodies? To prevent this Mrs Gandhi will have to liquidate us tonight." Desai went on to admit that there probably were people who had intentions to use means more violent than satyagraha, and he gave the example of an incident which sounded remarkably similar to that which happened to Advani. But the old man who visited Advani in 1976 in Bangalore, was from the south, one thousand miles away from India's capital, whereas Desai described a man from the north, a strapping Sikh, who had felt sufficiently incensed even as far back as 1973. "He came to me and told me, 'I am already old, sixty years old; my life has been finished. At the last, I would like to do a service for my country. I would kill that woman before she completely ruins India. But for this I need your authorization, because I want that after I kill her, a just man should succeed her.' Throughout hours," recounted Desai, "I explained to him that he could never get this authorization from me, that I would always object to this solution, that I would take a stand against violence, that is, murder. He kept (shaking) his head and repeated, 'Allow me to do this.' I hope nobody will ever do it," said Desai, then added, "But if somebody did it, how could I prevent it?"

Barely three weeks after Desai and others had been clamped into jail, as he had expected, Mrs Gandhi stated that "democracy is not abandoned, only derailed," although she attributed the reason to the opposition, not to any of her own acts. Soon after she said that "the nation was more important than democracy." In fact, the *National Herald*, the daily paper started by Jawaharlal Nehru and patronized by Indira Gandhi—and therefore presumed to reflect her views, particularly during the emergency—came out with an editorial which praised the one party system in African states like Tanzania as being no less virile than the multi-party system. "The Westminster model need not be the best model, and some African states have demonstrated how the people's voice will prevail whatever be the outward structure of democracy. . . . By stressing the need for a strong Centre the PM has pointed out the strength of Indian democracy. A weak Centre threatens the country's unity, integrity, and very survival of freedom. She has posed the most important question. If the country's freedom does not survive, how can democracy survive?"

By 25 August, the same *National Herald* was earnestly pointing out that "the PM has made it clear in recent days that there will be no attempt to establish a one party system in this country and that she is not thinking in terms of a constituent assembly or a new Constitution. . . . As far as the party system is concerned, the one party system, however well it might answer needs theoretically, will not be forced; it can come about only in the course of natural evolution, and at present there is no such prospect."

What happened between 11 July and 25 August?

"Mujib's assassination," said L. K. Advani. "That gave her a shock, I think. Perhaps she came to the conclusion that the kernel of democracy should be maintained."

"I want to meet the leader of the underground workers," rang P. N. Singh, Congress member of the metropolitan council, to a journalist friend who was in the resistance movement. It was towards the end of July. Singh had escaped the police dragnet on the 26th by staying under their very nose in Chandra Shekhar's house. On the 27th, he caught an inter-state bus to Rampur, where he knew some friends. They tried to bring out a few pamphlets and other literature from there, but he had to flee soon. He went to Terai, to a farmer friend in a remote village. From Rudrapur in Nainital district they organized a printing press and began publishing underground literature. Ten thousand pamphlets were published when the press there too was raided and sealed. In Lucknow, where Singh spent about forty days, everybody was scared to death, even the Congressmen. He organized a few university boys and managed to smuggle printed material carrying news, which helped boost the morale of emergency victims in various jails. But he felt he was not doing enough. Back in Delhi he stayed all day at home and went out at night, till he could contact the man who could give him the lead.

"Come to my house," said Singh when he got the call from the leader. "Nobody knows I am here. Get off a little distance away and walk up."

Singh realized that he knew the man well when they met. They had dinner together. The leader fixed up a meeting with a liaison officer of a big firm, who he said could help. They met in a small restaurant called Lhasa, in New Delhi's South Extension area. They talked in detail about their plans, and about how he proposed to organize the work.

"I have to have a printing press. I've got about fifteen or twenty boys who can work with me," said Singh.

"You can have fifteen or twenty lakhs, whatever amount you want," said the liaison man.

They met three times in Lhasa, all four of them, and spent a gruelling time going over details. They asked Singh where he had been, where he had stayed, the names of whom he had met and where their homes were, how they worked, and who their other contacts were. Singh even got a bit suspicious, but he told them all he knew. The man with them was in control of the entire underground movement in Delhi, so nothing could go wrong, he thought. They decided to meet finally at the liaison man's house to get the money.

It was the night of 6th August—9 pm. Singh had a friend—Kulwant Kumar Gupta—with him. It was raining when they reached the posh locality of Maharani Bagh, where the liaison man lived.

They got off from the taxi in front of the house. It was dark. There were no lights outside. Singh felt uncomfortable. He thought there was a man shadowing them. He tried to shake off the feeling. The leader could not have introduced them to a wrong man. They entered the house. The man was sitting alone in the spacious, richly furnished drawing-room. Singh again became suspicious, when a bearer entered carrying tea in a tray. He looked like a policeman in plain clothes, with the typical short hair-cut and a smart stance. Then the leader arrived; Singh relaxed. He introduced his friend. They again went into details about all the people who would be involved, and again, about those in Rampur and Terai and Lucknow. Then the liaison man took out ten thousand rupees in fresh notes. He handed over five thousand. "Send somebody tomorrow for the rest," he said. Singh wondered why he did not give the entire amount. Perhaps he was testing them, he thought, but he felt uncomfortable. All four took a taxi to Lhasa. The leader went off to attend a meeting. That set Singh wondering again. The liaison man, Singh, and his friend Kulwant, stayed on to have dinner. They talked until midnight.

Singh reached home at 12.30 am, not daring to admit his suspicions even to himself. Seconds later there was a knock. He was half expecting it. So his suspicions were correct, he thought to himself. He saw a deputy superintendent of police, and two station house officers of the area around Sarojini Nagar, where he lived. He knew them well. They looked apologetic.

"*Chaliye,* Singh *Saheb* (Come, Mr Singh)."

"You needn't have taken the trouble. You could have just rung me up," Singh answered.

Kulwant had been arrested as well, but they did not tell him.

They took Singh away in style, with a jeep carrying the red warning signal of the police in front. They were speeding away past the Red Fort, when suddenly the wireless in the police car started screeching, "Red Fort, Red Fort!" The car swerved immediately, so he knew where they were going.

They put him in a dark, smelly, dingy cell. "I'm not going to stay there!" he shouted. But then the local police went away. He was left to the posse of officers from the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), and men, as he says he learnt later, from the dreaded Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), which normally deals with foreign intelligence. Some men of the Central Reserve Police (CRP), who were also present, were asked to push Singh into his cell. He had no option. There was a horrible smelly *charpai* (rope-string bed) on which he sat down. It was 2.30 am. He would have to get through the night somehow, he thought. He pushed the *charpai* near the bars of the door to get some fresh air. The whole night a man with a rifle walked up and down outside the cell, his steps breaking the stillness of the night.

At 7 am the superintendent of police from the intelligence bureau opened the doors. "We are very sorry," he apologized. "The phones were out of order, so I didn't know." He was very sympathetic. "You should have been treated better. We'll take you to a better place. We'll have to tie a bandage round your eyes though. I hope you don't mind."

Singh was only slightly disarmed. He had heard too much about police methods. But what could they want from him, he wondered?

They blindfolded him, made him walk around, up a few steps, and then into a room. When they removed the bandage, he saw an airtight room panelled with wood, and a wheel chair. There was a carpet under which seemed to lie a lot of wiring. There were four chairs, a table, and a room cooler which wasn't working. A ceiling fan went round and round, blowing hot air.

The first to enter the room were four men from the CID crime branch. Singh sat in the wheel chair. They sat in front. They started by asking him for biographical details—where he was born, where he studied, what his political affiliations were, how he met Chandra Shekhar, and how he was connected with Jayaprakash Narayan.

"What did you do between the 12th and the 25th of June? How did you feel?" they asked him.

"Mrs Gandhi should have resigned. That would have been better for the government and the party. Not doing so has harmed the party."

The four of them kept on asking the same questions over and over again. When one of them would finish and Singh would answer, another would start, then the third, then the fourth, then back again to the first, the second, the third, and the fourth. It took four hours. Then they pushed their chairs back, and got up. "*Achha* (alright), Mr Singh, we'll meet again," they said.

Hardly had they stepped out of the door, when four more men walked in. They were from the intelligence bureau. Pulling up the chairs, they began, "Now then, Mr Singh. . . ."

They asked the same questions, the same way. One at a time till the fourth man, then back again. Singh's answers became more and more mechanical. "She ought to have resigned. It would have been good for the party. Not doing so has harmed the government and the party. She ought to have resigned, it would have been good for the party. . . ." Singh began to feel sleepy. They gave him some tea. "Now then, Mr Singh, where were you born? Where were you educated? How did you meet Chandra Shekhar? What are your contacts with Jayaprakash Narayan? What did you do between the 12th of June and the 25th? How did you feel?"

"She ought to have resigned, I told you, I felt she ought to have resigned," Singh kept on answering. "It would have been good for the party, it would have helped the government. . . ."

Suddenly they shot a new question. "What relations have you with Jagjivan Ram?"

That woke Singh out of his growing stupor.

"I know him as a leader of my party. Also, we have a Bhojpuri Samaj, of people from eastern UP and Bihar. He was president, I was the secretary."

They asked him about his meeting with Jagjivan Ram on the 26th morning. He told them how he had met him and what he had said.

"No, that's not true," they said in a chorus. "He said, 'As long as Indira Gandhi, Sanjay, and Barooah are alive, democracy cannot be restored. So whatever money you want, I'll arrange it.' That's what he said."

"No, you're lying!" shouted Singh.

"We have a tape."

"Let me listen to the tape, then I'll agree."

"You had better repeat what we are saying, otherwise your family, your children, everything will be ruined."

"No! It's a lie!"

"If you say it we can take you to Mrs Gandhi and you can have whatever political advantage or position you want. If you accept this, it'll be very helpful to her and you can have anything you want."

"No, no."

"The results will be bad. We'll have to apply third degree methods on you."

"I don't care," said Singh.

They had been gruelling him for four hours.

They got up, pushed their chairs back, and said, "*Achha,* Mr Singh, we'll meet again."

In came a third group, another batch of four. Singh had recognized some of the earlier men. He did not know a single one of the new ones. Both earlier groups had asked him who his friends were in the police, the IB, or RAW. When he mentioned the names of his friends in RAW to the third batch of men, they began to look at each other. Singh immediately began to suspect their identity. It was the same round again, the same questions, and the three groups in succession, for twenty-four hours. He was too sleepy. He stopped wanting even tea. He hadn't bathed, washed, or been to the bathroom since they had brought him there.

At 2 pm he was taken to court, where the police charged him with being involved in a conspiracy. He got a remand for four days. They brought him back to the same room. Again began the same round. By the third evening, they lost their patience. "You won't listen," they said, "so we'll

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have to do something." They made him stand against the wall. The batch of four would change, but they would keep sitting. They kept him standing for nine hours. Then suddenly, six floodlights of 1,000 volts each were switched on around him, focussed on his eyes. For one idiotic moment Singh thought they were going to take a photograph, but his eyes shut automatically in the glare. As soon as that happened, he felt an electric shock in the feet from the wiring under the carpet, which they began to manipulate. His eyes opened with a jerk, only to feel the glare of the lights. As soon as they'd shut, the electric shock would run up through his feet. Within five minutes he was perspiring profusely. The torture was so intense that he began shouting, "Let me be! Kill me if you like!" Then the lights went off. The electric shocks stopped. There was pitch darkness. Suddenly he heard the wierdest of sounds, strange eerie noises which seemed to touch raw nerves in his brain. He felt his head would explode. His body began to shake, he fell on the floor, and began to writhe in agony. He thought he would go mad with those sounds. He thought he was going to die. He almost fainted.

Then it stopped. The ordinary lights went on. The gang of four came in.

"Mr Singh, get up."

He could not.

"You have to accept what we say, otherwise we'll have to go on like this."

He managed to mutter, "Well then, go on. I'll go on as long as I can."

"Alright, think it over," they said, and left.

There was a reprieve. He was offered some lunch.

"No," he said. "I want a bath."

He was blindfolded and taken to a filthy bathroom, then brought back. Four more days of questioning followed, but no torture of the earlier kind. He refused to fall in with their demands. Finally, an officer from RAW—"I know he was from RAW because the guards on duty outside told me later," said Singh—shouted the warning, "We are the servants of that *Devi* (goddess). If you don't listen, we'll do what the Pak army did in Bangladesh. We'll get your wife and your sisters and rape them in front of you!"

Singh lost control of himself. He picked up a chair and threw it at the man. Immediately, other officers came rushing in, offering apologies. "He should not have said such things. We'll take action against him." It was all a strategy, Singh knew. In fact he thought there was a glass panel in the wall from which they must have been watching his reactions. They let him sleep that night.

After that they took him to Rampur, where they got hold of all the people Singh had talked about in Lhasa restaurant. They tried to prove that he had bought arms to kill Mrs Gandhi at Jagjivan Ram's behest; they took him to Terai, Lucknow, everywhere; they played a cat and mouse game with him, alternating between keeping him in comfort at a rest house and leaving him for a night in a rat-infested cell. "We'll talk to you about politics tonight," they would say in despair, in an effort to make him commit himself.

"Do you think Mrs Gandhi's regime will ever end?" they would ask, trying to intimidate him. "The army and the police and India's *janata* (masses) are with her. None of them is protesting. Why don't you cooperate with her?"

"She won't be in power for more than a year and a half," Singh would reply. "She's constantly harping upon wanting democracy. That means she's frightened of being a dictator. If she wants to stick by the Constitution she'll have to go in for the elections some time or the other. As soon as that happens, she'll be out. If she declares herself a dictator, she can't last long either. Even a dictator has to be popular, or have a cause. She has neither now. She'll be assassinated. One of you will do it. What do you think? Even your own boys and girls in the universities don't agree with you!"

"We have to do our job," they said helplessly in weaker moments. They also thought he was relenting.

Back in Delhi, they took him to the court again. "Well?" asked the magistrate. "Have you found any proof?"

"It's for the nation's security," said the police. "There are VIPs involved."

The magistrate looked upset.

"I'll tell you," said P. N. Singh abruptly. "They've given me a hero's role. They've made out a plot about Jagjivan Ram. They want me to admit to it. Do give them as much time as they want."

Back at Red Fort, he got really alarmed for the first time. A senior police officer of the CID confided to him, "They are planning to arrest your wife and two uncles tonight. Don't tell anyone that you know. You should accept. You should say it's all correct."

Singh said he would think about it. He felt shattered. He was convinced they meant it. He re-

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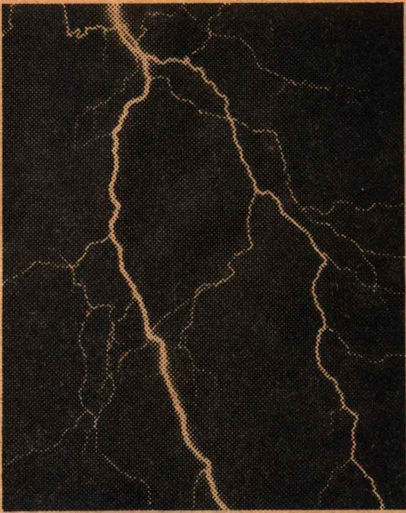

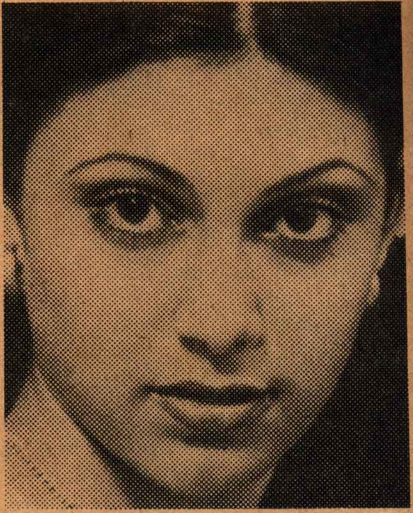

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membered how some people had broken into his house and ransacked it even before the emergency. His wife had fainted and the children were left crying. A witness had said they were Arjun Das' men. The situation now was even worse, and Arjun Das still had his knife into him. Singh visualized his wife—a simple domesticated woman—in jail, and trembled with fear and anger.

"I can help you," said the CID man. "Just ring up your wife, and say she should give up the revolver."

Singh realized they must have planted it there already. They gave him the telephone. He found a way out by speaking to her in the Bhojpuri dialect. He told her they were pressurizing him to implicate himself.

"Don't get taken in!" shouted his wife shrilly. "Don't agree. There's no such revolver here."

The police came rushing to him. "Talk in Hindi," they said desperately. "We can't understand."

The next day was 15 August, the day of India's independence. The ghastly news of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's murder flashed across the world. Singh immediately sensed a palpable change in the atmosphere. Everybody looked chastened. The sub-inspector said to him fearfully, "She's going to be killed too. Mujib is finished, with all his family. The emergency will go also."

Another sub-inspector who replaced the earlier one on duty asked Singh, "Are they going to arrest Babuji?"

"Possibly."

"I want to warn him."

"Why?"

"I am also from the scheduled caste."

Singh told him to meet an SP who was close to Jagjivan Ram. But there was counter vigilance even over the guards, for they got to know that the sub-inspector had visited the superintendent of police. Next morning he came to Singh again and said he wanted to meet Jagjivan Ram himself. Singh gave him the name of Ram's secretary. The sub-inspector met Indira Gandhi's defence minister and found the next day that he had been called to the headquarters for a reprimand. He was taken off Singh's duty.

But the same morning, the CID and IB officers came to Singh. "You'll be glad to know that the aspect about Jagjivan Ram is going to be deleted in the charges against you."

"You got it in, you're welcome to take it out," Singh replied laconically. But a tremor ran through his body. He thought he could face whatever else was in store for him, but this had been a close shave.

On 13 April 1976, the demolition squads of the DDA descended upon Turkman Gate with the fury of 5th century Hun invasions.

"It didn't happen slowly," said Hafiz Mohammad Yunus, a Congressman of the area—thin, sixty, and bewildered. "It just happened. One moment we had houses, families, jobs, dignity, self-respect. The next moment, there was nothing."

The 300-year-old buildings of Turkman Gate—at least some were that historic—and families that trace their descent from the Mughals, stood as both a physical and cultural link between old and new Delhi. What happened at Turkman Gate became the watershed between the first half of the emergency and the second. It closed the gap between subterranean terror and open cruelty. It was the first incident after the promulgation of the emergency which involved violent repression of people's anger. It epitomized all the problems that became issues of crisis overtaking Mrs Gandhi and the Congress—the alienation of the minorities; the basic resistance of a conservative society to something like family planning, and the inhumanity of the methods employed; the involvement of Sanjay; the misuse of MISA; the threats; and the lack of understanding and the sheer cultural callousness which guided people who were otherwise sensitive, otherwise receptive, and otherwise imaginative—like Indira Gandhi herself.

It was as if the emergency too was double-faced. The discipline, stability, higher production, punctuality, hard work, bigger foreign exchange reserves, and twenty-five point programme were like a satin cloak, all shimmering gloss and soft smoothness, but hiding a body full of sores and gaping wounds. A bridegroom sterilized, a teacher driven to suicide, a family made homeless, a prisoner without redress, a business gone bankrupt, the income tax raids that became political, the torture of party colleagues and old associates, the filthy tortuous intrigues, and the conspiracies to destroy, to demean, humiliate, and ultimately deaden the nerve centres of society.

In fact there were two faces of society itself during this period. There were those who suffered and were full of fear, and there were those who did not suffer and did not know. There was

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hardly anyone who knew and did not suffer, except Mrs Gandhi who saw it all happening before her very eyes—like Turkman Gate, which she saw but did not seem to care.

"We're demolishing only up to there," said a DDA official pointing out the line to Hafiz Mohammad.

"But they've gone further," cried Hafiz Mohammad.

The man got up to see, and shook his head. The building came tumbling down. "Take that woman to the hospital," he said pointing to a young woman with a new born baby who was left lying on the street without a roof over her head.

On 14 April there were a row of private houses left in one line—some rich, elaborate, airconditioned and large; others small, dirty, uncomfortable, but *pacca* (made of brick and mortar). These were no *jhuggis* (shanties) or *jhuggiwallas* (shanty dwellers), but everybody was nervous. They had not received any notice, but they had no confidence left in the procedures of administration. They went to the beauteous Rukhsana, who had adopted the area for a sterilization drive that had Sanjay raving and the people on the verge of revolt. They knew she had only to make one husky call to Navin Chawla and the orders would be revoked. But Rukhsana demanded a price.

"I'll stop them," she said. "But you have to do three things. Put up a board about Sanjay's programme, plant some trees, and give me sterilization cases."

"We'll give you 150," they said in despair.

"That's too little. You know I have to show Sanjayji."

"Alright *Baji* (sister), but save our houses."

"I'll ask Jagmohan and tell you."

That night they met Khurshid Alam. "You shouldn't worry if she's given the assurance," he said. On 15 April they could not meet Rukhsana, and the demolition hordes were invading the area much beyond unauthorized structures or DDA property. They went to Subhadra Joshi. "We're only removing the *jhuggis*," she said. They were horrified. "Even you are saying that. There's no *jhuggi jhonpri* in all of Delhi now, where would you find them here? We are all Congressmen, these are our own private houses, all 3,400 of them." She then took a complete list.

On 16 April Haji Karamat, who was working closely with Rukhsana, advised them to see Mrs Gandhi. "I know that family," he said proudly. "I have a son who has grown up under their patronage. She will definitely listen."

The members of the local Congress committee then got together in two buses and went to see the prime minister. "Let us settle here. Our forefathers have made these houses with their sweat and tears. They talk as if nothing belongs to us any more."

Mrs Gandhi was abrupt and gruff. "If this is the way we keep resettling you, how can we make the city beautiful? We can't do anything for you people," she said and walked away.

On 16 April Karamat told them to go to Dojana House, Rukhsana's family planning camp. "I've told her and Jagmohan everything," he said.

The people were scared. They mustered up a crowd of 500 but they were nervous. They could be hauled up for sterilization, the operation they all dreaded.

"We've brought you 201 cases, *Baji,*" they said to Rukhsana. "Give us one house for one case."

"I'll think about it," she said, all evasive charm.

At night, they went in truckloads to meet Arjun Das.

"We want time to find another place, that's all. Give us till the 1st or even till the 29th—you'll find everything vacated."

"I can't do anything," he said. "That's Rukhsana's area."

That night, a friend whom they would not name, urged them to send a petition to the PM. He promised to see that it was placed right on her table, where she would definitely see it. They wrote one petition to Mrs Gandhi and the other to Sanjay. When they took the papers to 1 Safdarjang Road, they saw Mrs Gandhi speeding away in a car. They took the petition again at 11 pm, when she was expected back. It was placed on the table. They learnt later from their friend that Sanjay picked it up, read it, and flung it aside. Indira Gandhi picked it up, read it, and put it back. She then pushed aside the curtain and walked away towards her room. . . . The next morning the family went off to Simla.

On the 18th a group of four frantic residents went to Jagmohan, along with Karamat, who was also the DDA contractor.

"If you stick together like this in one area you'll never progress," said Jagmohan.

"Doesn't matter. You please let us stay where we are."

Jagmohan flung his spectacles on the table with anger, turned to Karamat, and burst out, "I don't

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The four of them got so frightened they came away quietly. They went to Mir Mushtaq, Congress president Barooah, who did not even face them and just took the petition, saying nothing, and then to Subhadra Joshi. Just when she agreed to visit the area with them, there came a telephone call, presumably from Barooah they realized, who must have told her what she might expect if she interfered in Sanjay's project. Subhadra Joshi came out saying, "I'm not really feeling well. I don't think I can go."

On the 19th morning the bulldozers swept into the area amidst women wailing, children crying, and the stony silence of men. And then came a storm of furious protest! A stone flew across, an eighteen-year-old-boy was shot, and pandemonium! The local police came to the residents' rescue, especially of young girls who were pursued, according to accounts given by men and women still shaken by events, by lustful men of the CRP. Others who could not escape jumped from rooftops to save their honour. Homes were looted, a bride's jewellery usurped, and men beaten up inside their houses. Women were not only raped, but scarred on their breasts with burning cigarettes.

Curfew was clamped.

The next day little white slips were distributed to families made homeless for plots of bare land as compensation—fifteen miles away in Khichripur. Haji Mohammad Idris, whose wife had been beaten up the night before in the crowd, said stonily, "I had a big house. The rooms were air-conditioned. There was furniture, television, a refrigerator, clothes, possessions. . . ."

"Get an affidavit," broke in the officer giving the slips.

A pall hung over the Muslim world in the entire country. An innocuous little item was allowed by censors in the papers, but an underground leaflet which reached a few, gave the names of those killed. . . .

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi did not visit the area even when she returned from Simla. But when Sheikh Abdullah turned up distressed, almost immediately thereafter, to find out what had happened Mrs Gandhi rang Yunus, "There are so many reports coming. Why don't you go and see?"

"Yes," said Yunus, "the Sheikh has already asked me."

When the two set out to tour the colonies where the Turkman Gate sufferers had been sent off, DDA chief Jagmohan accompanied them. That must have taken away their credibility immediately. But one fact stood out clearly. The people uprooted had not been *jhuggiwallas*. They were residents and tax-payers of an area they had inherited. They were not usurpers, they had been thrown out with an inhumanity that certainly did not go with a programme of social advancement. One of the residents of Khichripur colony accompanied Yunus and the Sheikh to Turkman Gate. There they heard of the "harassment," but the word "atrocity" was not used. They heard of the DDA's "high-handedness," but the name "Sanjay" was not used.

"Did you think they would be too frightened to say anything?" I asked Yunus.

"No. I thought that just as I tell exactly what I feel about a situation, others would do the same. Not even a fraction of what came out later was told to me."

"But on that fact-finding tour they found that the very man who had offered to show them around had been arrested, right from under their nose. The Sheikh was furious and went back to Kashmir. But Yunus went to the prime minister.

"Something must be done about the police there. I've already spoken to the lieutenant governor. The proof of it was that even our man was hauled up in our presence."

"We must look into it," said the PM.

The same evening when she enquired from other people about Turkman Gate, Mir Mushtaq tried to shield the police.

"That man was not arrested!" he told her. "He had tripped over my feet, so the police asked him to keep away."

But Begum Fakhruddin had visited the area and found complaints against the same police officer who had behaved so audaciously. She told Yunus. When he went again to the PM, he burst out, "In future I shouldn't be sent to places where I am put in such an embarrassing position. There's no action even about one little police officer."

"What am I to do!" exclaimed the prime minister. "Look what everybody is saying." All three of the individuals actually concerned—Mir Mushtaq, the lieutenant governor, and the IG police—had told her that there had been no arrest.

It was obvious that Mrs Gandhi preferred to believe them, aided, no doubt, by Sanjay's conviction that a few people dying here or there

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should not hamper the fulfilment of a project. At a seminar organized by Shashi Bhushan, where he had invited Sanjay, the young politico singled out the instance of Prem Sagar Gupta, who had shown the resettlement statistics to P. N. Dhar, for a sarcastic comment. "He had given piles of notes to the PM's house," said Sanjay. "All were found to be false!" Obviously, against this background, when a deputation went to President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, who was quite shattered by the whole situation, and he complained to the prime minister, she brushed it off by saying that he should not take a communal angle on the affair. Nor, she made it clear, did she think that Begum Abida's assessments about the resettlement problems were true.

Mrs Gandhi had obviously made her choice about whom she wanted to believe.

On 10 December 1976 some residents of Jama Masjid were taken to see an alternate site. But as they sat in a jeep with DDA officials and the police, they heard an officer remark: "Whoever raises an objection, put him under MISA." The next day 200 women from *Khan Khana Gali* (a lane in Jama Masjid) went to the prime minister with a plea, asking not to be shifted. "We have no such programme. You can sit calmly," assured the prime minister.

Izhar Asar, a writer and social worker of the area, then went to Rukhsana. "Don't force the people. They have got an assurance from the prime minister, so nobody is prepared to leave."

Rukhsana opened a file. "Yes, I've got all the names of the persons who are creating mischief. I know the men who sent their wives, each one of them. They all have to shift. Whosoever doesn't, will suffer. Maman *Saheb* of the DPCC can tell you. I took him to Sanjayji—he said in his presence that the police should be used and everybody shifted. I told Sanjayji that I'll remove them with affection, not force. So please tell them that if they go willingly they'll be at an advantage."

The threats started. "If you don't shift there'll be another Turkman Gate," the men said.

The people mustered up courage yet again, and went to the prime minister. "You said nothing would be done but they've already started throwing us out."

She was quiet. "Dhawan *Sahib* is coming, you talk to him."

When Dhawan came he told them in front of her, "We found out from Mir *Sahib*. He said you were going willingly!"

The Mir was writing poetry those days. It was coming out in great waves of inspiration, he said:

> The truth they would not let her know
> Who on untruth, thrive, fatten, grow
> But she stands for people's glory
> And knows full well the true story
>
> It's time the sycophants beware
> Or else their deeds would lay them bare.

Nobody told her that the greatest flatterer was the one who told the king that he could never be flattered. Perhaps she liked what the Mir told her. Perhaps she had decided not to see through it.

"I wrote to her in 1974," said Radha Raman, "that I was her loyal *bhagat* (devotee), but that loyalty should not be interpreted in the language that had become current then. It should not hinge upon one personality, that we should beware of a personality cult. Dhawan never even gave her the letter. He returned it to me!"

In Dojana House, in one of her evening *durbars* (court sessions), where she gathered all her workers and admirers to go over the day's happenings, Rukhsana cooed with suggestive charm. "You know what I said to Sanjayji today?" she asked the men at her feet. "I said, 'Darling, there's a lot of opposition brewing in the city,' and you know what he said? He said, 'Darling, you can burn half of Delhi, I won't ask you. . . .'"

"Sanjay was ordering officials around, that Krishan Chand was a mass of pulp put there by Navin Chawla, the police were at Rukhsana's beck and call, even my wife started work in family planning to offset the way Rukhsana was doing it. I told her we're trapped in this, why do you want to get into it? We told Indiraji what was happening, how can she say she didn't know? I spoke to Sanjay several times about the raids that were conducted and the money collected through pressure. He said, 'What proof?' What proof can one give like that? It was the style. When I said about the demolition, he said, 'Keep out of it.' He didn't do anything on policy without consulting the PM, but not on detail.' She would say 'Yes.' And the result was that whatever he said would be done with extra vigour. I couldn't match his aggression, the way he talked. Yes, he said *tu* to me. I thought he could be moulded into a good leader. That didn't mean he should be the future prime minister. The sycophants were gaining ground steadily. I admit I didn't have the courage

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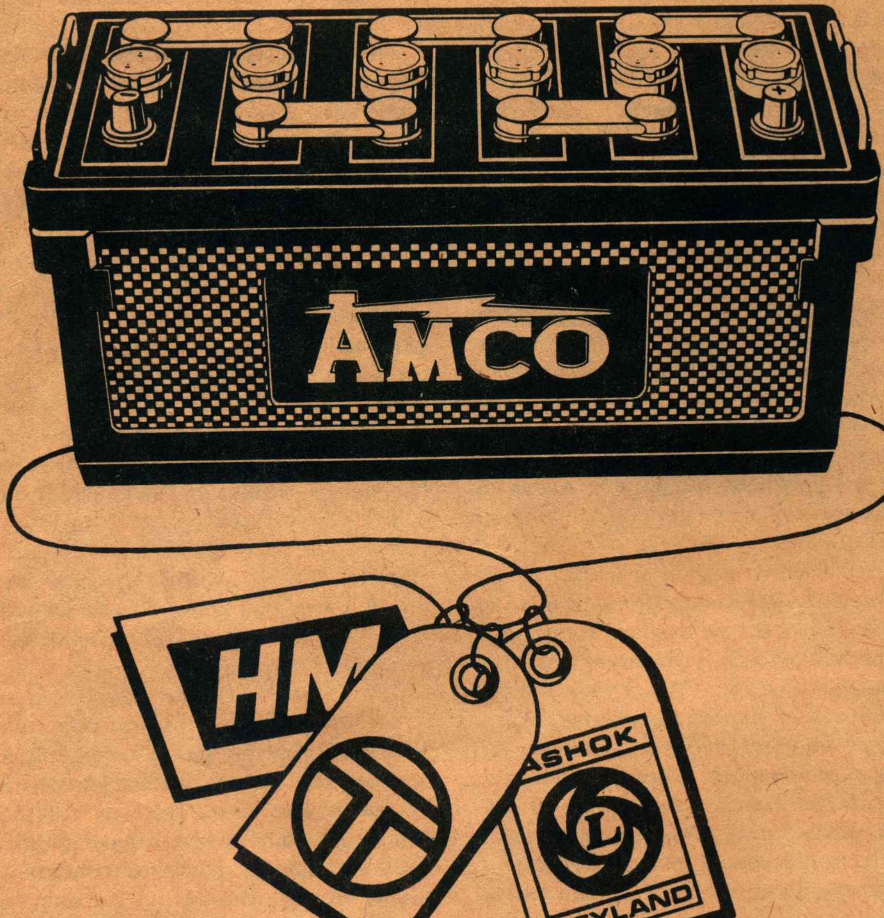

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to say I'm giving up." This was Radha Raman, in his seventies, being thrown around by a newcomer like Sanjay only because he was the PM's son. "They kept grumbling, this Congress leadership. Their fear kept growing, but they kept accepting."

"Didn't you know what was going on in the country? Why didn't you people go to the prime minister and object?" I asked Kamlapati Tripathi as he squatted in his chair, with visitors coming in and touching his feet in recognition of his Brahmin origins.

"I am too confused," replied the hardened boss of the political world who had managed to survive many a buffeting. Tripathi now spoke with great perplexity. "If one argues to oneself that the integrity of the country was at stake, that there was foreign money operating and a conspiracy brewing, as in Bangladesh, and that the same thing could happen here, then one wonders what could have happened if the emergency had not been declared. If one thinks of what happened afterwards, the excesses that were undoubtedly committed, salaries of teachers stopped, whole villages sterilized, even young men and old men—of seventy—taken away and people clamped into jail on personal counts, then one wonders what would have happened if *this* hadn't happened. Whatever it is, I feel very sad."

According to Chandra Shekhar the Congress leadership was not just frightened of the wrongs they had committed, they were also waiting patiently, and giving Indira Gandhi a long rope. . . .

When the supreme court upheld Indira Gandhi's election case on 5 November 1975, L. K. Advani wrote in his diary in jail, "I'm praying she does not release us." They were convinced that if the judgement had gone against her, Indira Gandhi would have taken recourse to drastic action. She had made sure, however, that the judgement should not be hostile. She had called an emergency parliament session on 21 July and had the *Representation of People's Act* amended in such a manner, that the very grounds upon which Sinha had based his judgement became invalid. Along with MISA, the *Representation of People's Act* too was made non-justiciable.

With the danger of being thrown out behind her, the opposition felt she might relent and release them. That she did not do so within even two or three months was her second mistake during that period. In November, as in June, the opposition had not the ghost of a chance to consolidate their unity and present a viable front. It was continued imprisonment. The satyagraha movement started then, and the solidarity of purpose attained thereby formed the later embryo of the Janata. In one week, from 16 November to 20 November, 175 persons offered satyagraha in Delhi, 450 in Punjab, 255 in Haryana, 360 in Rajasthan, 60 in Himachal, Jammu and Kashmir, 1,325 in UP, 1,800 in Bihar, 132 in West Bengal, 124 in Assam and Manipur, 103 in Orissa, 360 in Andhra Pradesh, 108 in Tamil Nadu, 540 in Kerala, 1,375 in Karnataka, 1,430 in Maharashtra, 200 in Gujarat, and 418 in Madhya Pradesh. Along with this was the underground movement. "We had three objectives, to contact people, to print leaflets exposing the tyrannies of the Congress regime, and to give wide publicity to our activities," described the socialist leader Brij Mohan Toofan who took up the organization in the north. Delhi, he said, was a place hounded by the CID, and very unsafe. When leaders began to be arrested, the strategy changed and it was decided to send taped messages to the world outside. "Berlin, London, and Stockholm," said Toofan, "proved to be very receptive and the news sent encouraged friends to start papers. Towards the end of 1975 an attempt was made to send emissaries abroad. Forged passports proved handy and they cost only two thousand rupees per piece. By January 1976 our resources dried up, friends were arrested on the slightest suspicion, houses were raided and relatives harassed day and night. But Bihar opened a new chapter. JP was out of prison. We began to take regular advice from him. Our underground workers posed as film actors to meet him!"

Bulletins called *Satyagraha Samachar, Jan Vani, Resistance, Satya Vasta, Mini Motherland, Kranti Doot* and others began to circulate clandestinely, giving points for action: "Remember daily that . . . our leaders are languishing in prison; keep a part of your earning every month as an offering to the nation in its hour of trial; spare a member till the present challenge is overcome."

Mrs Gandhi's answer was a succession of constitutional and statutory amendments that made her position almost unassailable, and gave her the leeway to operate economic measures to some effect. Parliament was made supreme, the fundamental rights suspended, and courts stripped off their authority to hear disputes on the election of the prime minister, the president, vice-president,

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and Lok Sabha speaker. When the supreme court itself upheld the right of Mrs Gandhi's government to imprison political opponents without court hearings, Justice H. R. Khanna's was the lone dissenting voice which argued for the right to issue a writ of habeas corpus as "one of the most important characteristics of democratic states under the rule of law." To the argument that the verdict was legal under the emergency powers granted in the Constitution, Justice Khanna said that "in the purely formal sense, even the organized mass murders of the Nazi regime qualify as law."

"My father and I were amongst the first people to raise their voice against Hitler and Mussolini at a time when in England and America, and many of the European countries, there was great admiration for them," said Mrs Gandhi. "Many of my personal friends died in concentration camps. So I feel more about this. . . ."

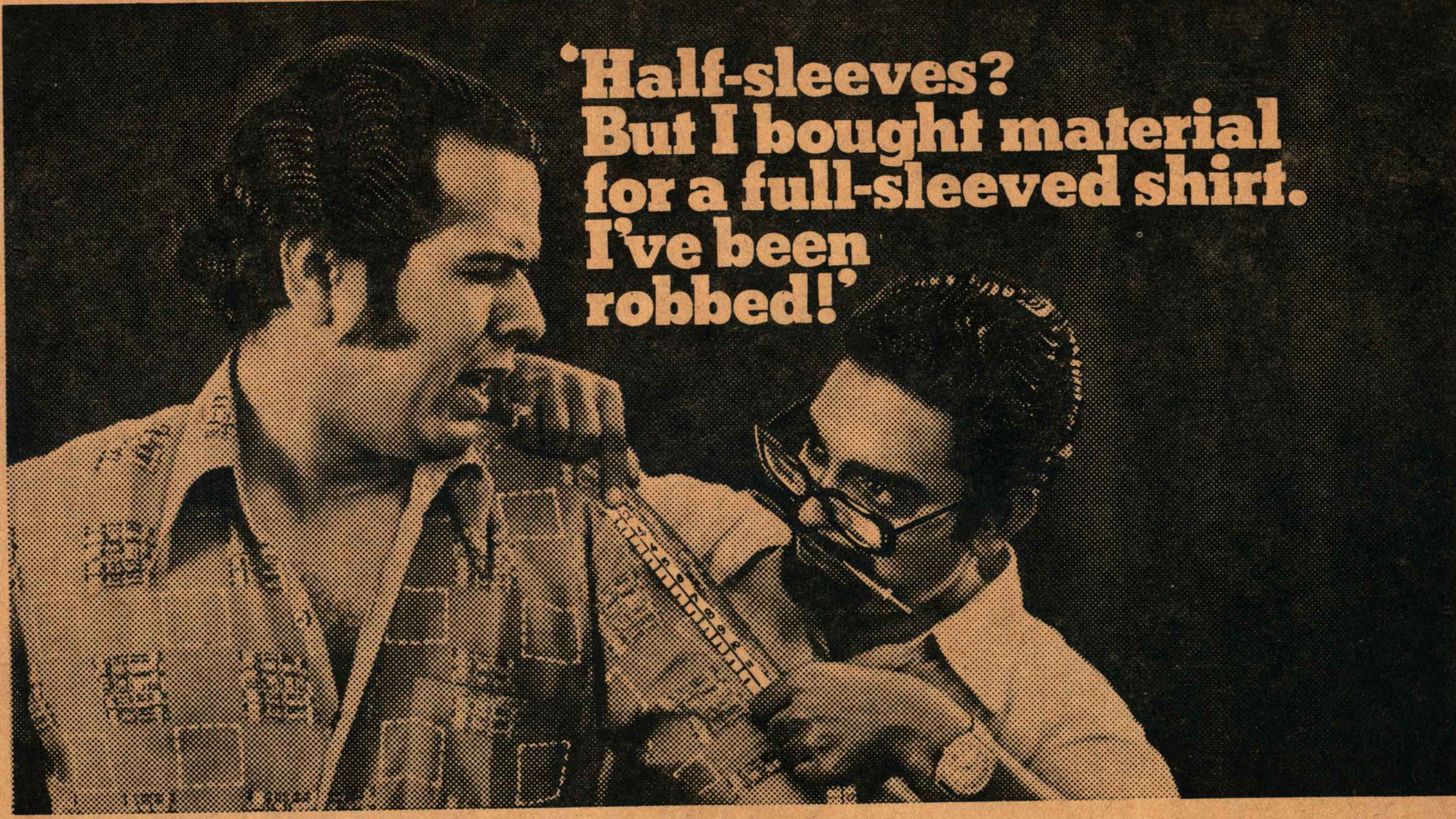
But this is precisely the point emphasized by the barrage of underground leaflets—the likeness with the Nazi example in creating a constitutional validity for dictatorship. By June 1976 the last of the democratic ideals had fallen. Elections due in February that year had been postponed, and the life of parliament extended by a year. The opposition outside protested feebly that a parliament which did not have the sanction of the people was not legally entitled to pass any amendments to the Constitution.

This package deal for authoritarian rule was neatly tied up with control over media. Censorship was imposed along with the emergency, and stringently exercised. But the creation of a single national news agency by amalgamating four existing ones was a fundamental, structural departure which was not expected to disappear along with censorship once the emergency was lifted—if and when that was to be. *Samachar* was not a concept which came only with the emergency, but like a number of other measures it took practical shape during a period when opposition from the media itself could not stall its birth. Unlike newspapers or magazines which had to publish after pre-censorship at one stage and according to guidelines set by the government later, but which also retained independent authority for a more propitious time, the Press Trust of India (PTI), the United News of India (UNI), the Samachar Bharati and Hindustan Samachar lost their identities, and as a single unit became virtually the official voice of government.

It was when press matters in the non-aligned world first came up for formal discussion at Algiers in 1973 that the question of evolving suitable machinery to project the image of the non-aligned countries in that field was discussed in detail. It was Mohammad Yunus who kept passing on information to the PM from his travels in Africa, Asia, and Latin America at the time. Repeated enquiries were made by these countries about which Indian agency they were supposed to deal with. Yunus felt that India's size and capacity cried out for a large network—like Reuters in UK, AFP in France, TASS in the Soviet Union, and Antara in Indonesia. Only America had two agencies. Almost every other country had only one. By the middle of 1975 there came about a sense of urgency. "Pakistan is trying to create a Muslim news agency and rope in the Arabs and other Muslim states," said Yunus to the PM. "We will be completely left out. Some of the African countries were also thinking of certain groupings. This would divide the non-aligned world and we will again be left to the mercy of powerful western agencies."

"Yes, I think this should be done immediately," the prime minister replied.

The union minister of information and broadcasting then took up the matter, and because it was the time of the emergency, the huge complex that evolved around the making of Samachar rested squarely in government hands, even though one of India's most prestigious editors, Gopalan Kasturi of the *Hindu*, became the chairman of the board of directors. Samachar had the potential to put India on the media map of the world, but because of the emergency it became part of a tight media control programme within the country, and as monopolistic as radio or television. However, it acquired the position of being the sixth largest news agency in the world, enabling India to snatch the initiative from Yugoslavia and to take a lead in the formation of the press agencies pool for the ninety non-aligned countries. "It was decided that Samachar would have correspondents in every district or small town in India and open at least fifty offices abroad—fifteen in Asia, fifteen in Africa, ten in Europe, ten in Latin America, and stringers all over the world. The four earlier agencies put together had covered only a fourth of India and had only five offices outside the country. It was a concept commensurate with India's growing potential as a power to be reckoned with. What was needed was to give Samachar a structure of autonomy which could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make it independent of the governments that would come and go. It could evolve as liberated, forceful, and constructive a functioning as that visualized for radio and television as autonomous corporations.

Running concurrently with this exercise in tightening her control, there were the feelers that Indira Gandhi began to throw about a possible return to the democratic system, even as early as in November 1975. "We can't go on like this forever," she said to Yunus and to other people from time to time. "Look at the kind of things being said outside. Even Pakistan is being considered a democracy, even Pakistan is being flaunted as a home of democracy!" But when Sathe said to her before the Congress session at Chandigarh in December 1975 that she should announce the elections, she immediately began to prevaricate. "We have just imposed the emergency," said Mrs Gandhi. "If we let the opposition leaders off and then again we have to impose it, it'll become a joke."

"You can maintain it, but relax it," said Sathe.

"No, no," she said, "the constitutional changes are being brought about. We have to wait. If we don't and we come in a reduced majority, we won't be able to get them through."

It was a fantastic situation. If ever there was a political *gherao*, it was around Indira Gandhi in 1975–77. And if ever there was somebody more than willing to be *gherao*ed, it was Indira Gandhi. The leftists had broadly bruited thoughts of a framework within democratic norms, but with stronger central authority. The idea for a presidential system emanated from the Barooah-Rajni Patel-Ray axis, but on the other side was the complete non-ideologue Bansi Lal, for whom power was god and god was not in the heavens but on earth—earthy and available.

"Look," said India's defence minister to Sathe in the central hall of parliament one day, "Go to her and tell her we don't want elections for ten years—at least ten!"

"Are you serious?" asked Sathe, shocked.

"Yes, I'm very serious. We don't want elections. We want time to consolidate gains, the party organization, and improve the economy. And why not a one party system? I'm a *jat*. I have done so much in Haryana. Give me three years for India and see what I do."

"What is your sanction in the Congress Party? It's the people, isn't it?" argued Sathe, "If you don't have elections, you'll lose the sanctions. Then where will you go? The military?"

"Sathe *Sahib, military kis ki hai* (whose is the military)? It is the *jat*'s and the Sikh's. I can control them. They can't go against me. . . ."

"That would be a straight road to the disintegration of the country," replied Sathe. "Take Maharashtra. It's only twenty-five odd years since we became a nation. You go and raise a slogan there like *Shivaji ki jai!*—and no *jat*s or Sikhs would be able to help you after that! The army can't hold a country like India."

Bansi Lal fell silent, but he kept the issue alive in parliament all the time. His attitude tied up with the editorial in the *National Herald,* Mrs Gandhi's own comments on the elections, and the fact that he was, almost every evening, at the prime minister's house, not sitting with her, but with Sanjay, presumably working out a strategy or an action programme for the next day, while Dhawan was around as a necessary confidant. Mrs Gandhi was not at variance with her son on any of the other matters. It is obvious that she was not on this issue either. She was letting Sanjay be the instrument of her political moves. She was the one with the political mind, not he. One can't disregard the influence that his reports would have on her, and in so far as she depended upon the presumed acumen of a non-political agent, she was bargaining for trouble. She was certainly not being led blindly from one authoritarian step to another. To interpret it as that would discount the authority and the perception with which she had held the country for ten years.

"Whenever she has had good advisers," say some of her colleagues and political analysts, "she has done well. She has no marked capacities of her own."

But the point is, who chooses the advisers? She has not only selected the kind of advisers (or had people functioning as a caucus) who suited the imperatives of the period—her imperatives—but she has also done so in a homogeneous, all-pervasive way. Contrary to the assumption that she did not let a team emerge, Indira Gandhi has always worked with a team. The only thing is, neither the advisers nor the team has lasted long enough. When she wanted the leftists, she had them in every area of functioning; when she wanted them out, they were replaced in all those areas of functioning. The advisers and the team she gathered for herself after the emergency had obviously to be people who believed in it, who were not bothered about the niceties of administrative procedure or the conditions of political morality. She brought in Bansi Lal as defence

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minister and Shukla as minister for information. She saw Sanjay's autocratic behaviour with Siddhartha Shankar Ray. The fact that she let Sanjay operate on such an ever-expanding scale even after that, proves that she wanted it that way. Why she relies on him or used him that close to the affairs of state continues to baffle some people.

"She's not only terribly arrogant but utterly foolish," says Vijaya Raje Scindia, the former maharani of Gwalior, who also fell victim to the syndrome of harassment, imprisonment, parole, and imprisonment that the emergency brought for the opposition, particularly the Jan Sangh, of which she was a member. "I was always her follower and accepted her as leader, but she's never been able to distinguish between the genuine and the undependable amongst her supporters. Perhaps that's why she trusts only her son."

"Would you as a political mother project your son in this manner?"

"Never. If he has it in him he would make it on his own. Perhaps Sanjay did not have it in him, that is why he needed his mother's assistance at the age of thirty!"

A vibrant and dynamic woman, the *Rajmata* of Gwalior, as she is still called informally, voiced the feelings of many who see reasons beyond the political machinations that guided Mrs Gandhi in her attitude to her younger son.

"I'm told he has some secret up his sleeve and that he has kept something abroad, some proof against her which he would reveal if she disowns him. I don't know. But how else can one explain this strange hold over one's mother?"

"It's one of those human dramas of the household," says play-wright Balwant Gargi, from the point of view of a creative writer who sees beyond the outer facades of power politics. "She was always dominated by her son. By the stories one has heard of Sanjay's childhood—he was so pampered that she would always give in. He was a reckless, rash driver; his delinquency, his arrogance, his rash, irresponsible utterances, his moods—all that the mother takes. He finally becomes a monster who sucks at her will. Look at Akbar, powerless from love, before a son who even incites a revolt against him. I met her once with my wife for a small, exclusive supper at the PM's house. I found a tremendous reserve and power in her, but she was so vulnerable. The grand-children who toddled in tugged at her sari and kept disturbing the conversation. 'Don't mind him, he's like a pet,' she said. She is so fond and indulgent, a typical mother. She would probably take anything from her son."

"I would put it at early 1975 when she began to disregard the opinions of her colleagues," said C. Subramaniam, her former finance minister. "In retrospect, I can complain only till after the emergency."

"After?"

"In my view, all sorts of undesirable persons get into positions of real or assumed authority. I think one of the reasons she went in for the elections was because she felt this might be the last opportunity to get out of their clutches. Even about Sanjay I used to tell her often that he was interfering in government, but she would say, 'no, not really, these are just stories.'"

"Why couldn't she tell him?" I asked.

"This is something between mother and son and other personal matters."

"What personal matters?" I insisted as he began to look more and more uncomfortable.

"I can't tell. I can't go into that."

"Was it some kind of hold he has on her?"

"Yes, you can say that. It goes back to much earlier than now."

Like a number of other Congressmen, Subramaniam says that he too sought to keep a distance from Sanjay. "I never received a phone call from him, never talked to him. My dealings were with her. Whatever confrontation there was came over appointments and things like that." Only once did two important persons go to him about "a ticklish matter," wanting him to discuss it with Sanjay. "I said no," said Subramaniam. "I'll talk to her if anything. I don't know whether they came on her behalf or not."

How Sanjay's big time deals came to be talked about is typified by a dialogue between two officers. One of them was apparently chastized for not being cooperative about a Sanjay contract.

"*Aré yaar*, you were a great fool. You don't even know how to fix a contract!"

"Well, how!" exclaimed the other.

"It's so simple. You call for tenders in the usual fashion. You open the tenders. If the party you want to favour has not quoted the lowest rates, then you can start negotiations. You find a snag. You negotiate more. You can always cut off the party with the lowest rates by saying that it would not be technically advantageous to give the contract to them, that they do not have the capacity needed to produce the item, nor the finance. Finally you can tell the party you're interested in that it should match the lowest rates."

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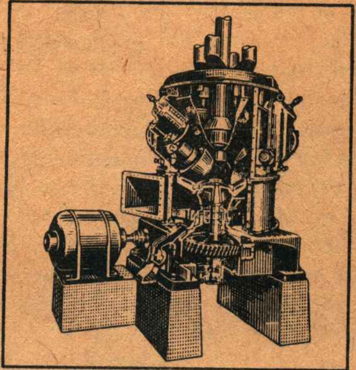

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"I know all that," said the other officer dispiritedly.

"Then why didn't you do it that way?"

"I tried, but Sanjay and his party were not interested in matching the lowest rates. They wanted the contract but on their rates! How could one fix that?"

When it came to the harassment of some officers in the industries ministry, a matter associated in the public mind with Sanjay, Mrs Gandhi knew exactly what the position was. A starred question on Maruti had to be answered in parliament by T. A. Pai, the industries minister. Sanjay refused to go to the ministry with the required information, so an under-secretary and a section officer went to the Maruti factory. The two men came and reported to Krishnaswamy, the director of heavy industries, saying that they were not only refused information, but had been abused by Sanjay as well. He filed this and said that the minister should give an answer in parliament, saying that "Information will be secured to lay it on the table of the House later." Within a few days, Krishnaswamy's house was raided and he was charged under some excise rule or the other for keeping half a bottle of whisky with him! Krishnaswamy is a teetotaller and the bottle was the usual kind that anyone brings off a plane after an air trip. Both Pai and Mantosh Sondhi, secretary in the ministry, got him off the hook with great difficulty, and Pai wrote a note to Mrs Gandhi about it. In the process Sondhi came to grief as well. He began being followed by a CID car everywhere, and charges were drawn up against him on some other count. "That year was hell," recalls Sondhi.

Pai had sent Mrs Gandhi a note. When Swaran Singh and K. C. Pant went to plead with her on Sondhi's behalf, she would not listen. Then went Rajni Patel, with all the anger of an old friendship.

"He's an innocent man!" he exclaimed. "You can't have him prosecuted on trumped-up charges."

She relented. "Alright then," she said. "But tell him to behave."

Patel had no direct arguments with Sanjay, nor did he see him. But V. C. Shukla urged him to see Sanjay. "*Dada,*" said Shukla, addressing him by his favourite term, "you must go and meet him."

"He's only a friend's son," replied Patel. "I'll meet her, not him."

But such were the vagaries of the political climate that it was Rajni Patel who invited Sanjay to Bombay, for the latter's first foray as public leader. It was not long after, that Patel's image was sought to be demeaned and his role as president of the Bombay PCC denigrated because one, that he was a leftist; two, that he had saved Mantosh Sondhi, and three, that he had had three long sessions with Mrs Gandhi on the issue of holding a constituent assembly meeting to draw up a new Constitution, and tried to dissuade her from pursuing the move. "It would be political suicide for you," said Patel to Indira Gandhi. Sanjay was furious with him, says Patel, about this "wrong advice" that he had given to the prime minister. And soon after, CBI enquiries were instituted against Patel, customs files were probed into, bank accounts were seized, and the rumour spread that he had been mishandling party funds.

It is obvious that Indira Gandhi was not averse to the idea of convening a constituent assembly. Otherwise, she would not have discussed it at great length with Rajni Patel. On the other hand, when Yashpal Kapoor told her that A. P. Sharma had called a meeting of sixty or seventy MPs to discuss the issue and have the legislative assemblies of Haryana, Punjab, UP and Bihar endorse the idea, she exclaimed, "Sharma *kaun hote hain yeh meeting karne wale* (Who is Sharma to call such a meeting!)" But the legislative assemblies of Punjab, Haryana, UP and Bihar did pass resolutions in favour of the idea, though this happened during Mrs Gandhi's visit to Africa. Meanwhile, the matter came up for discussion in the parliamentary party executive, where they felt that the whole thing was being worked out in a state of panic. When Mrs Gandhi returned, Sathe was one of the people who went and argued with her about the repercussions. "As soon as I came down at the airport I was told that these resolutions had been passed," she said. "How do you expect me to react like this?"

Sathe argues that Om Mehta and Bansi Lal were behind this move. Also, Sanjay. Their idea was that if the constituent assembly sat for deliberations it would take three or four years; so elections would not be held. By then the Youth Congress would be in power and could take over the Congress itself. But oddly enough, Sathe contradicts his own analysis by saying: "I may sound cruel, but I do think Sanjay is incapable of taking a political view of this nature. He's a well-meaning boy with strong commonsense, but no political knowledge." Who was the person then? The only conclusion is that one must substitute

ONE COUNTRY, ONE PEOPLE

TOGETHER THEY WORK

in a train compartment...

Gurnam Singh is on the train to Madras; he is going on business. The journey is long but the boredom is relieved by conversation with the families; they are bound for different places. Nagpur, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Nellore, Tiruchirapalli; they speak different languages among themselves. But to Gurnam Singh they speak the language of friendship. Friendship has no barriers.

davp 77/48

BARRIERS ARE BORN IN THE MINDS OF THE IDLE> ***help remove them***

Indira Gandhi wherever Sanjay's name comes in, because he was the mask for her other face—the second face.

For a long time in the public mind, and in that of the Congress party itself, there remained the illusion that Mrs Gandhi was innocent of Sanjay's frenetic drives. But no matter which sphere one looked into with care, there was evidence of her initiative, knowledge, and political will. Everywhere he seemed to be running counter to her, but everywhere it was a parallel course. Each time he was used as a testing pilot in the political scene. It is this point which concerns the theme of this book, not his alleged private or monetary scandals. It was when she said at the Gauhati session of the Congress that "an attack on Sanjay is an attack on me," and repeated it in a meeting of Congress workers in Delhi, that the idealistic haze began to clear from the eyes of the Congress leadership.

"It was then that people realized that if she were to return to power with the sanction of an election, she would rule with much more ferocity," said Chandrajit Yadav.

"Do you believe so?"

"Well, her faith in autocratic rule would have been strengthened and Sanjay and Bansi Lal would have been on top."

Indira Gandhi was deliberately taking the country towards dictatorial rule, but only as far as she was allowed to. That is the clue to every contradiction between her words and their consummation or their abortive fate. She set up a committee on constitutional amendments under the chairmanship of Sardar Swaran Singh, which got the parliamentary endorsement of the rest of the Congress leadership. But she did not go through with the constituent assembly idea because she found too much opposition within the party. She got in the clause which said that the elections of the prime minister, president, vice-president, and speaker should not go to court, but she did not press with the infamous suggestion that there should be complete immunity for life against any criminal proceedings for the prime minister, president, and governors—for acts before or after office.

About this even the enthusiastic Margaret Alva was horrified. The bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha, they were given a three line whip, there were two speeches, they voted and came out. Everybody was shocked. So Alva went to see the PM. She had always given her the feeling that she would listen—once you won her confidence.

"Madam," said Margaret Alva to the prime minister, "I am very junior. But I had to come to you. This thing that we've voted for, we're all very unhappy. I don't know if the others will have the courage to tell you. . . ."

"Isn't it already there?" enquired Indira Gandhi innocently.

"What we objected to is the hurried manner in which we were made to do it," said Alva.

"I'll look into it," said Mrs Gandhi.

The bill never went to the Lok Sabha.

Yet again, when it had been decided that Chandra Shekhar should be expelled from the parliamentary party executive for his association with JP before the arrests, the party constitution was sought to be changed so that people could be expelled without assigning any reasons for the expulsion. V. C. Shukla and Raghuramaiah were trying to push it through. Alva again objected. "Where was the need for you to act so wise?" asked Shukla later. "What guarantees do you want? If we feel like it, we can throw you out of the party without giving any reasons!"

"In that case," exclaimed Alva angrily, "Why don't you throw the Constitution out? Why do you have to show people you have amended it!"

Where Mrs Gandhi thought they were going too far, she would retract a bit. When Om Mehta and Raghuramaiah went to her about increasing the term for parliament to seven years, she exclaimed, "I don't like it!" Then it was decided that it should be extended to six years. "Alright, but don't come to me and say next year that you want to increase it to eight years," said Mrs Gandhi.

Had the Congress leadership decided that they would not allow this steady emergence of a powerful one-woman rule, they could have stopped it. But the emergency had given too much of a shock to the senior leaders, while the younger ones were products of a Congress Party which had not had its own elections in years. "Always some reason or the other was brought forth," said Chavan. "The general trend looked like drift." But in the light of later events it is obvious that Mrs Gandhi established her control over the organization in much the same way as she later held her cabinet captive. Nominated party officials were a certain guarantee of personal allegiance. They were all using Sanjay as a means to be in the inner circle, but they became so servile that they never let Mrs Gandhi know how unpopular she was becoming.

There was one point about which Mrs Gandhi

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will he?
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was also genuinely in the dark—and that was about the image of Sanjay. She was not allowed to believe that the initial curiosity which brought the crowds to him had waned, and the big shows that each state organized relied on money, fear, and the emergency.

Sanjay's whirlwind tours of the states began with Sita Ram Kesri calling him to Bihar on 12 September 1975. "I took him to Sadaquat Ashram without an escort," said Kesri. "He was not accorded VIP treatment at that time. It was natural to ask him. The sons and daughters of the great have always been called upon to give away prizes, or perform functions for charity. But I was also very impressed with his views. I thought he could stand against the caucus that was already around her at the time." Kesri was, of course, referring to the leftists.

"You know how it all began," said Dhawan. "The chief minister of Punjab invited him to Fazilka. So Bansi Lal immediately wanted to organize a big welcome for him in Haryana. It was a competition. I told him not to. My instinct told me that the PM didn't like these things. I know the way her mind works."

There was no stopping the gathering momentum. But from the very beginning, ministers and chief ministers flocked around Sanjay on every visit. From Delhi to Chandigarh to Vishakapatnam down south, it was—

> Sanjay Gandhi said youth must root out social evils. . . . He was accompanied by the union minister for works and housing. . . .
> Mr Sanjay Gandhi said work, not isms, were needed to carve out a better future for India. . . . He was accompanied by the union minister of. . . .
> Sanjay Gandhi gave the five point programme plan of action at Bangalore—he was welcomed by Chief Minister Dev Raj Urs. . . .

In Andhra, Union Minister Raghuramaiah paid such fullsome tribute that it embarrassed even his colleagues. "I have served two generations of Nehrus, I'll be happy to serve the third. . . ."

By 31 October 1976, Chief Minister S. B. Chavan in Bombay dispelled any illusion that Sanjay was being welcomed only as the voice of youth. "He is a leader of the people," crowed the veteran politician.

In West Bengal, in a ten-hour trip to Calcutta, the crowds began chanting in rhythmic frenzy, *Sanjay Zindabad, Sanjay Zindabad!* Chief Minister Ray wrote to Mrs Gandhi saying "it was a phenomenon."

Dev Kanta Barooah's advocacy was the strongest because it came under the garb of reasoned comparison.

"How old was Maharaja Ranjit Singh when he became the king of Punjab? Eighteen! How old was Shankaracharya when he died? How old was Swami Vivekananda when he died? Thirty-nine! How old was Akbar when he conceived the idea of a cosmopolitan empire? He was merely in his teens. In this country lots of things have been done by young people and a lot of mischief has been done by the old."

In fact, most of the circle close to Mrs Gandhi was fed so well on the growing charisma of her son, that those who described it to her began to believe it themselves.

"You know that story from the *Puranas*?" asked Sita Ram Kesri. "A Brahmin *devta* (god) was carrying a little goat. Five dacoits wanted to steal it from him but they thought that if they caught him near the village, there would be a hue and cry. So they stationed themselves one by one at a distance of a mile each. "What is this you are carrying, sir?" asked one thief. "A little goat," said the Brahmin. "No, no, this is a puppy," said the thief. At the second mile, the other thief exclaimed, "What a lovely puppy you have, sir!" "No," laughed the Brahmin, "it's a little goat." When the third thief at the third milestone exclaimed, "Why don't you let me have this puppy, it's so beautiful!" the Brahmin was angry but he started feeling uneasy. At the fourth milestone the thief said, "Where are you carrying this beautiful little puppy?" The Brahmin thought he was going mad. At the fifth milestone, when he was accosted by the fifth thief, who said how beautiful the puppy was, he had started believing by then that it was a puppy, and having no use for a puppy, he just handed it to the thief in disgust and walked away. How can you blame Indiraji? This is what happened with her. She had to believe he was great."

"I told Vidya Charan (V. C. Shukla) not to play up Sanjay too much," said Madhya Pradesh leader Arjun Singh. "Indiraji could always right a wrong if she saw it. I feel that she is basically very humane, rational, and sensitive. For the rank and file of Congressmen the evil lay much nearer home."

Indira Gandhi was the prime minister, but she was also a mother. She apparently told K. D. Malaviya, probably when he tried to point out some of Sanjay's lapses, "*Behad pyar hai us se* (I

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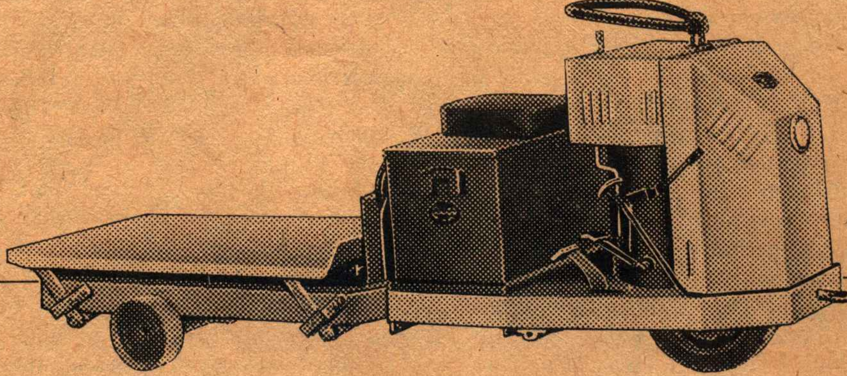

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love him too much)." There was a story going the rounds, told by another former minister of her cabinet, that in a discussion in Sanjay's presence about the crisis that led to the emergency, Mrs Gandhi took both Sanjay's hands in her own and said, "These are the strong hands which saved me." It was not strange, therefore, for her to think that Sanjay could inherit the Nehru mantle.

In recognition of Sanjay's growing role in politics, to further his prospects, and to give the official stamp of approval to his tours, Congress President Barooah dashed off letters to chief ministers to accord him all the facilities and the respect during his visits. To prove their vehement acknowledgment of his crowd-drawing capacity, they said he should be provided security. Verbal instructions were then given by the prime minister's secretariat to the intelligence bureau. Chief Security Officer Lobo issued instructions to the special branches—the subsidiary intelligence bureaux in different towns—in charge of various regions. These instructions were meant for the guidance of police authorities. Contrary to the general impression, Sanjay was given security on par with that provided for chief ministers. For the chief ministers there is no escort car but a pilot car, for one thing, but the security for the prime minister is totally different, even from that for the president.

Narain Dutt Tiwari, UP chief minister, was a typical example of a man who talked rationally, but behaved like a knight in shining armour in the employ of 1 Safdarjang Road. Why did he so overreach himself?

"There was a circular letter from Barooahji from the AICC, that we must do everything for Sanjayji. So when he came to UP, I accompanied him everywhere. Later on another letter said Indiraji had said we should not receive him at the airport. But we were told that he was a crowd catcher, so we must be with him. Even he protested that he didn't want any government help, but everything was being done for him. It was in the papers, on TV. She knew everything."

"Did you think it was right?"

"Theoretically perhaps not, but practically, well—one had to."

"Were you afraid?"

Tiwari was silent.

"Didn't you know that things were going wrong, that there was resentment among the people, that the Congress was being destroyed?"

"My God, you don't take me to be like Pai and the others, and absolve myself. I don't want to say anything that will hurt her. . . ."

"But isn't there a moment when the country or the party can mean more than the individual? What do you go by?" I insisted.

"Loyalty," said Tiwari simply.

Brahmananda Reddy, with everything in his past to make him proud, and everything during the emergency to make him want to forget—"poor fellow," said a colleague, "he had no standing at all. He has his own grudge against Mrs Gandhi"—goes to the root of the matter, like an experienced Congressman.

"The decline began over the years. When one person becomes too big, the others suffer in consequence. We must have, at the all-India and state level, people of stature who can be considered leaders in their own right. If you merely appoint a politician, then he can act only as an administrator. The people must feel he is elected, only then will he owe responsibility to the people. We discussed this in private talk but not in the PCCs, or emphatically at forums."

"Why?"

"Maybe there was too much awe, maybe too much fear, maybe too much emotion—it was a combination. Maybe there was euphoria. . . ."

"But that was only for a short time," I said.

"Oh no!" exclaimed the crafty Reddy. "It lasted long enough!"

"Why didn't you protest during the emergency if you felt there were wrongs being done?"

"Why should I have allowed myself to be put in an embarrassing situation? I never met Sanjay Gandhi. I never went out of my way to meet Mrs Gandhi. I said what I wanted to on files. I didn't want to get into that. There may have been several Om Mehtas or something, but *they* never told me to do anything."

"But you were involved in the governance of the country at a crucial period," I said.

"I never did anything I felt I shouldn't do, but I remained aloof," argued Reddy, and went on to give a classic description—"*I was like a lotus in the pond.*"

So, it seems, was the rest of the Congress leadership. Except that some were getting their bottoms dirtied.

On 18 January Indira Gandhi announced the elections.

She had to do it, both from an inner compulsion and from outward necessity. Very typically, she did not consult the chief ministers, her cabinet, the home minister, nor even, as he indicated

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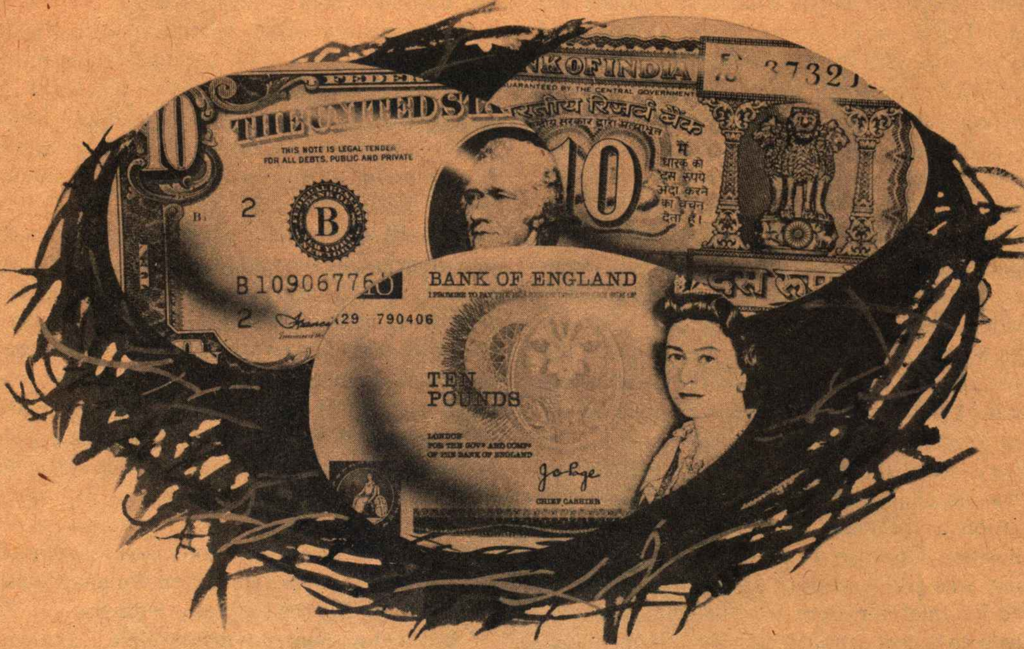

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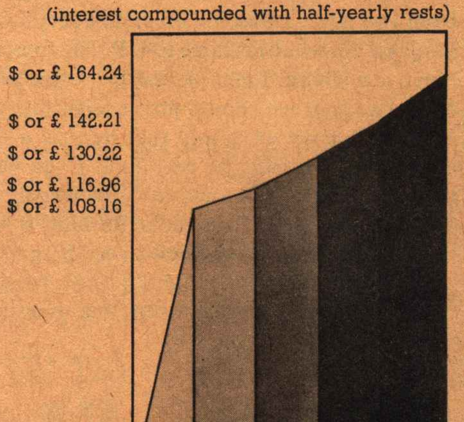

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later, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. She had tried to combine dictatorship with democracy. It didn't work. There were rumblings beneath the calm. The Congress was in a coma, but a people were on the move.

Even Bhave, who was called the official saint because of the support he lent to the emergency, and who had issued his famous edict—*Anushasan Parva* (discipline is need of the hour)—during his year of silence, had been urging for its end since June 1976. Bhave, in fact, had supported Mrs Gandhi to the extent of suggesting before 25 June 1975, that she could deal with Jayaprakash Narayan with severity for leading a movement towards anarchy. The same Bhave was himself dealt with harshly only six months later. Then he gave the counter call to lift the emergency. An underground leaflet described it vividly.

> On 11 June the police raided Vinoba Bhave's *ashram* and carried out an intensive search. 250 copies of Bhoodan literature (copies of Maitreyi) have reportedly been seized. This was to warn Vinoba Bhave and his followers not to meddle in the affairs of MAD (Madam Dictator) when they have their meeting in July next. Thousands of enraged followers were kept at bay by the police during their search.

Mrs Gandhi was on a trip to the Soviet Union at the time. When Kesri met her on her return he told her about the incident. She said she had not known about it and was most upset. She said the states operated on their own and when people asked, they said the orders were the prime minister's. By September, Bhave was so disturbed about the continuance of the emergency that he went on a fast, with the ban on cow slaughter the issue. A group of MPs met Sanjay as part of the strategy to influence Mrs Gandhi.

"We can't let him die," they said.

"Any old man gives a threat, should we surrender?" said Sanjay as callously as ever. "We may as well surrender the government. Let him die!"

"He is not any old man," the MPs replied. "In this country only two people have ruled, the *rajah* (king) or the *rishi* (saint). In a clash, the *rajah* will always lose."

"No," said Sanjay, "mummy will look after it."

Nirmala Deshpande, Bhave's secretary, tried to soften Bansi Lal's attitude, but he too was adamant. "Lots of old men have died. We made a mistake by surrendering to Morarji when he fasted in Gujarat. We are not going to repeat the mistake."

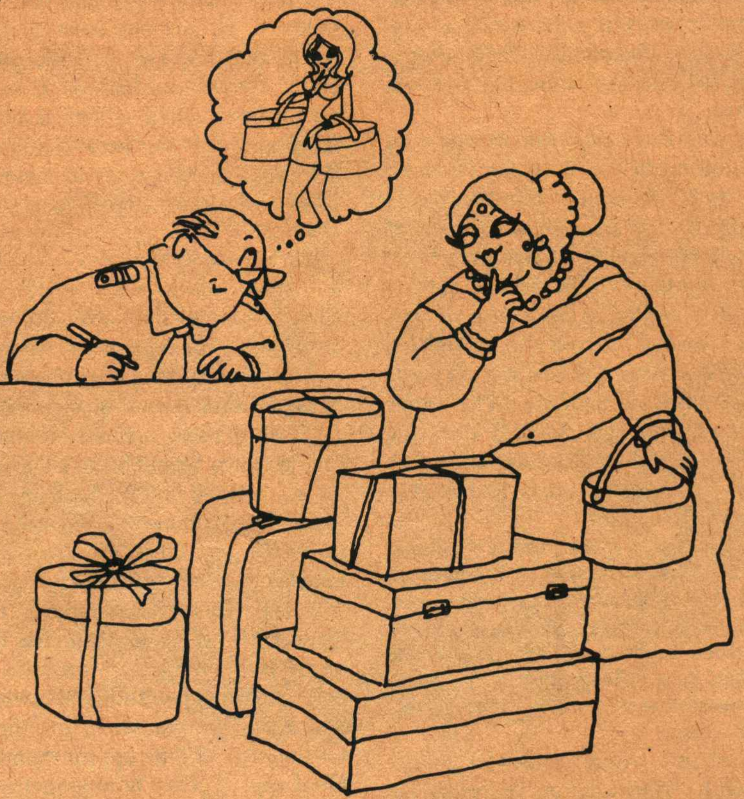
When a delegation met the PM, she showed concern. In fact she conveyed a message very subtly to Bhave two months later without necessarily committing herself. It was 21 December when Kesri called on her at her office in South Block and told her he was going to visit Bhave. Without saying that it was meant specifically for Bhave, she said, "How long can one delay the elections?"

"When I met Vinobaji on the 23rd I wrote him a little note—he was still observing silence—saying that the elections were round the corner. He had been very unhappy. It was obvious that Indiraji was not influenced by Sanjay because he didn't want the elections at all."

"Two days before the announcement, Sanjay told me there would be no election!" said Tiwari. "I was against holding them also. Not because I am against democracy but because this was no time. We started the kind of measures people long for, but they were not the kind of things to do in a parliamentary democracy. It was like having a patient for treatment who has to have a course of twelve injections. You give him eight very painful ones. Then suddenly, when there are only four left to go, you leave it to the patient to vote for the rest. Will he opt for them? Of course not. He'll say, 'I'll try homoeopathy or some other medicine. I don't want this painful thing.' We were not ready for the elections at all."

"The PM asked me in as early as December, when I returned from a trip to the US, what I thought about the prospects of an election," recalled Sathe. "Even then she seemed to know the position clearly. She said she was a bit afraid about UP and the northern states. She knew what she was going in for. I think she was so entrapped by a succession of events that this was the only way to break out of it and bolster the democratic forces."

That would be taking too romantic a view of a woman used to hard, calculated gambles. She was definite about what she wanted. Indira Gandhi wanted a sanction for her style, a political legitimacy for her son, and uninterrupted opportunity to rule the way she wanted to. If she could show that she could win even after a period of authoritarian rule—which no country had ever done before, or been given the opportunity to do so either—she would not have to suffer criticism from home or abroad. If she won she would get rid of the group (which Sathe likes to term as Frankenstein) that had formed around her. That would be nothing new. She would rid herself of



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them as she had rid herself of the others, once their relevance to her political imperatives was over.

She had let the palliatives start functioning. Jayaprakash was released in November 1975 itself, then Charan Singh, then Biju Patnaik, and then others in driblets. Talk of negotiations began in March 1976 between the Congress and the opposition, but did not fructify because she did not want them to. It was a strategy to weaken the opposition. Their morale was low, although Jayaprakash Narayan was being allowed to work out moves to form a single party. She reasoned that in any case they would not be able to challenge the organized might of the Congress, loaded as it was with funds and obedient workers.

In May 1976 Yunus told her that censorship was proving unproductive. She agreed, but nothing happened. In July again he argued for it and wrote an exhaustive note. In a meeting called to discuss this in which all the officials involved were present, Shukla said he would issue guidelines before going on his scheduled trip to Canada, and lift it on his return. When he did return, he freed only foreign censorship. Yunus made it clear that he thought it ridiculous to penalize our own newspapermen and let the others have the advantage. Mrs Gandhi said she agreed with Yunus. But as always, the outcome was different. Censorship was not lifted till the elections were announced.

According to intelligence reports, she had a fair chance of getting 280 seats, with a good harvest in tow. It seemed worth it. She was confident in her faith in the masses, while one reason for her electoral challenge was her belief that Sanjay could make it. He had been against the elections, but not against standing for them.

Sensitive to the political atmosphere in the beginning of February, Yashpal Kapoor said to Sanjay, "*Bhaiya*, don't stand for the elections."

"Why?" said Sanjay, "I can only lose."

"That's not the way to think about it. If you want to come into parliament we can bring you even in a bye election."

"But why shouldn't I?"

"Last time they picked on Maruti, but there was the Indira wave, so nothing happened. This time they'll pick on mother and son and the wave is not there."

On 15 February, before going to Rae Bareli, Kapoor asked the PM, "What have you decided about Sanjay? I've told him not to stand."

"No," said Mrs Gandhi, "he feels there are so many charges against him, he wants to be in a position to answer back."

In February itself, Dhirendra Brahmachari, whom Sanjay relied on greatly, also told him not to stand.

"How are you saying this?" remonstrated the stubborn young fellow. "What do you know about *rajniti* (politics)?"

"I am telling you what the people are saying," said the Brahmachari. "If you get angry, I'll just take my robes and walk away, what is it to me?"

Indira Gandhi got her son in at the last minute to stand from Amethi, a constituency adjoining hers in Rae Bareli. The feeling of some members of parliament that she would not mind if Sanjay lost, sprang more from a desperate idealism than from a realistic assessment of her involvement. They hoped that she would disassociate herself from him so that they could have a talking point during the campaigning.

When the tickets were to be distributed, the prognostications about the conquering spree of the Youth Congress proved correct, much to the chagrin and horror of the older leadership. Ever since the Gauhati session, where the PM had acknowledged that youth had "stolen our thunder," the main Congress Party had become nervous. Various criteria were discussed, all of which amounted to giving the Youth Congress a boost, at the cost of the tried and the experienced.

When Bimal Sharma, the aspirant from Bihar, went to Jagjivan Ram for help to get a ticket, Ram was very sarcastic. "I'm sorry," he said. "Last time I was Congress president, A. P. Sharma was PCC president, so I couldn't give it to you at that time. Now I can't do anything at all. You know Sanjay, ask Mrs Gandhi, Bansi Lal, Bihar's chief minister Jagannath Misra, Sita Ram Kesri. They can give it to you, not me."

Jagjivan Ram's patience exploded when the Youth Congress demanded 200 seats. He realized that his supporters would be cleverly denied their strength in the next parliament, that he himself was being humiliated beyond endurance, and that he had no future in the Congress. The emergency was still on. He told Mrs Gandhi quietly, on 1 February, that it should be lifted. She mumbled evasively that she would have the home ministry look into it. The next day, Jagjivan Ram did not just leave the Congress; he slipped out of her hands. He formed, along with Bahuguna and Nandini Satpathy, a rival Congress for Democracy, and waited calmly for an exodus from the Congress.

That brought the entire citadel of Mrs Gandhi's emergency tactics tumbling down. Three factors became immediately perceptible. She had to woo the old leadership and give them back their voice in party affairs; she had to soften her own approach; and she had to do something about Sanjay. By then the newspapers, in their recaptured freedom, were running riot. But with truth. The stories were right off the oven as it were—hot with people's anger. They revealed the dark side of the emergency for the first time. Contrary to her expectations, the opposition leaders had joined together in record time largely because of the unity forged in prison. The people came to the Janata rally in a spirit of spontaneous homage to those who had suffered in jail. At the Congress rally the crowds were there, but cold. When Jagjivan Ram walked out of the Congress, the people felt they could walk out of their fear as well. That day, the Congress was doomed.

"Madame," the IB chief D. Sen is supposed to have told the prime minister, "I'm afraid you're going to lose."

Sanjay's campaign in Amethi was typically lordly, and alienated the villager much more than he realized. I saw him doing a *padyatra* (walking tour) in a Muslim village. He looked embarrassed and strode at such a pace that the people were left standing and staring. The day Jagjivan Ram addressed a meeting in Amethi, there was a clash between Sanjay's men and the armed constabulary of the UP police. When the policemen marched in fury to *gherao* him in the resthouse at Gauriganj, where he was staying, Sanjay flew into a panic and rang Om Mehta for help. That is when the border security force chief Ashvini Kumar's men rushed to his rescue, to find that he was not too kind to them either. As a last resort Mrs Gandhi sent the *swamī*. He flew there in his plane and just managed to calm Sanjay down.

It seems that Rajiv, his brother, sitting in Delhi and watching with concern, realized that something drastic was needed to save the situation. He went to P. N. Dhar. What if Sanjay were thrown out of the party as a face-saving gesture? That would have an impact. Dhar contacted the PM on her tours. She seemed to agree. When she returned, she found that apparently Sanjay would not fall in. The fear was that if Sanjay won, many Congress members of parliament might walk out, thinking that his presence in parliament would reduce them to zero. Three or four days before the poll there was some discussion that Bansi Lal should be thrown out and Sanjay asked to resign from Amethi. But this was also not carried through.

Indira Gandhi was desperate. She asked the president, who was on a trip to Malaysia, to return. He had to sign the notification for the elections. She rushed to him for advice. It was 10 pm and Begum Abida is supposed to have said he had retired for the night. "It's urgent," Mrs Gandhi is supposed to have said. When she saw the president, he is said to have remarked that she shouldn't behave like a child. "We can talk tomorrow," he said.

The next morning at 6, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was dead. "He didn't die of a heart attack," said Shafi Ahmed Qureshi, former union minister of state for railways, a while later, in a speech filled with emotion. "He died of a broken heart. . . ."

Indira Gandhi had reached a state in her mental make-up which, I am convinced, could have taken her along to martial law, had she found circumstances more propitious. She knew the navy's role did not matter much. The air force could be considered, but it was still not the material wing of the military to help her maintain her rule. It was the army which was crucial. During the Bangladesh war, Field Marshal S. H. F. J. Maneckshaw had felt how unfortunate it was that there was no unitary system of command in the political leadership. He had told me that during a war the PM should be in sole command. This applied to the army even more with its variegated composition. She knew that General T. N. Raina was too non-political to be drawn into the political area. Once the army tasted blood there would be no way to control it.

On 20 March, even before the results came in declaring a complete rout of the Congress, the news of Indira Gandhi's own defeat in Rae Bareli set a different course in modern Indian history.

Indira Gandhi did not resign for two days. On 22 March a sleek Toyota car was seen being packed with tins, presumably containing money. Part of the election money had been distributed to the contestants for the election from 2 Kushak Road, where a solid fence had assured privacy and security. Here every day, one tin would be brought from 1 Safdarjung Road, opened, and the cash distributed by P. C. Sethi for two hours to the politically needy.

The little Toyota was making sure that the money would survive to fight another battle one day. Indira Gandhi was not the kind to give up.

THE END

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—NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JAN 14, 1974—

TRY GARLIC IT MAY HELP

LONDON—Adding garlic to the menu may help prevent diseased arteries researchers reported yesterday.

Long respected as a popular remedy for a variety of ailments, the pungent root has now been shown by medical tests to have "a very significant protective action" in limiting the effects of fat on the rate at which blood clots.

Reporting this in a letter to the medical magazine, the Lancet, doctors Arun Bordia and H.C. Bansal, of R.N.T. Medical College, Udaipur India, said the blood of 10 patients coagulated more slowly when they ate garlic with fatty food than it did when they ate similar food without garlic.

In effect, this means garlic could help prevent fatty deposits building up on the artery walls and clogging them. (Reuters).

SUNDAY STANDARD

Vijayawada, Sunday October 17, 1976

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

BOMBAY, DEC., 3-1976

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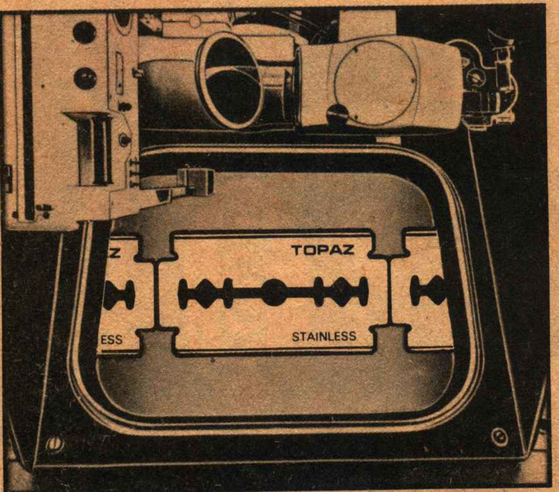

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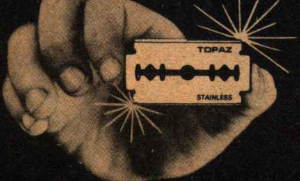

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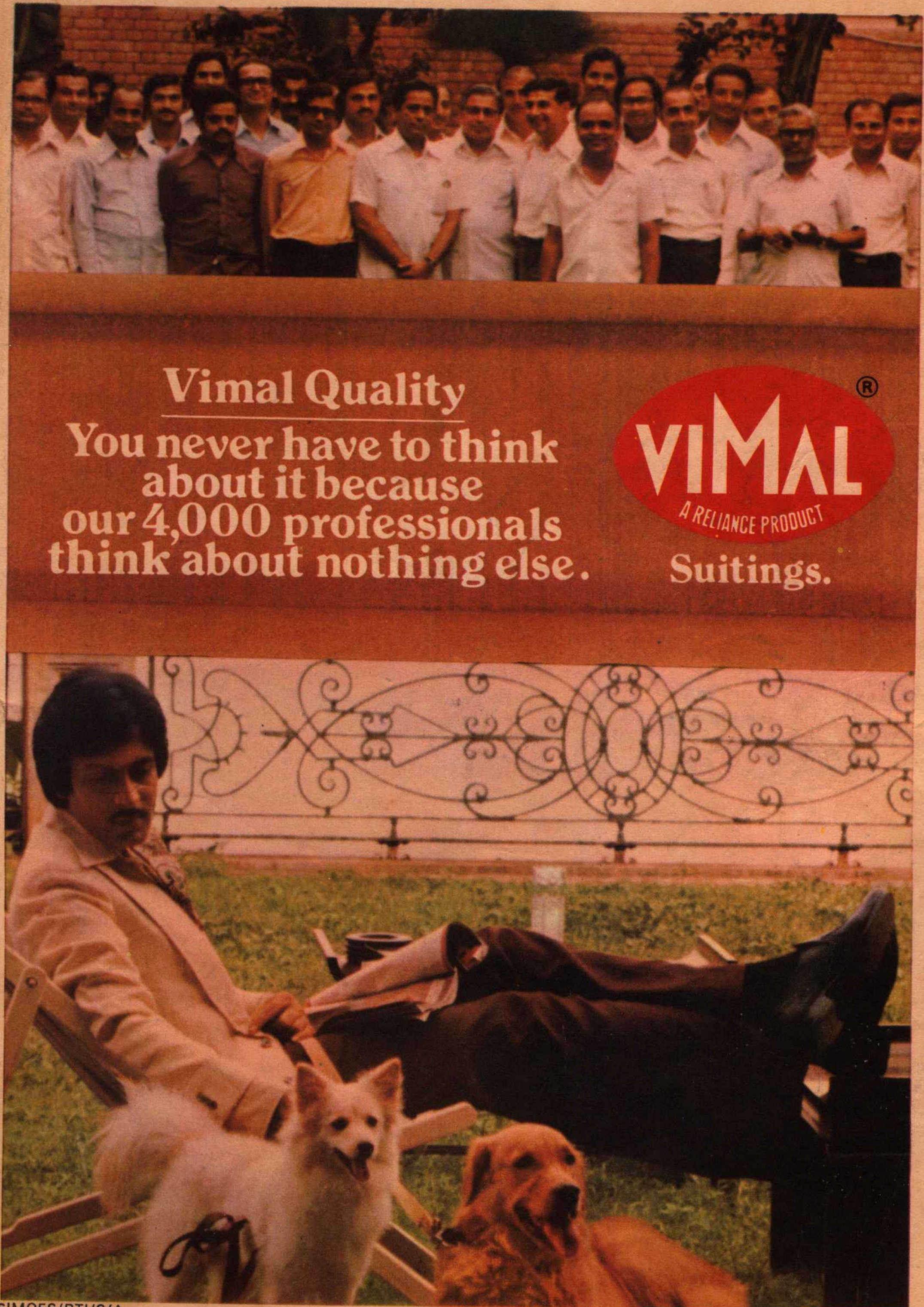
Edited by R.V. Pandit; published for Business Press Private Limited, Surya Mahal, 5 Burjorji Bharucha Marg, Bombay 400 023, by Dilip Joshi and printed by him at Business Press Private Limited care Usha Offset Printers Private Limited, Udyog Mandir Industrial Estate, 7c Pitamber Lane, Bombay 400 016 by photo-offset. Covers and 4-colour inserts printed at K.L. Bhargava & Co., Impression House, G.D. Ambekar Marg, Bombay 400 031



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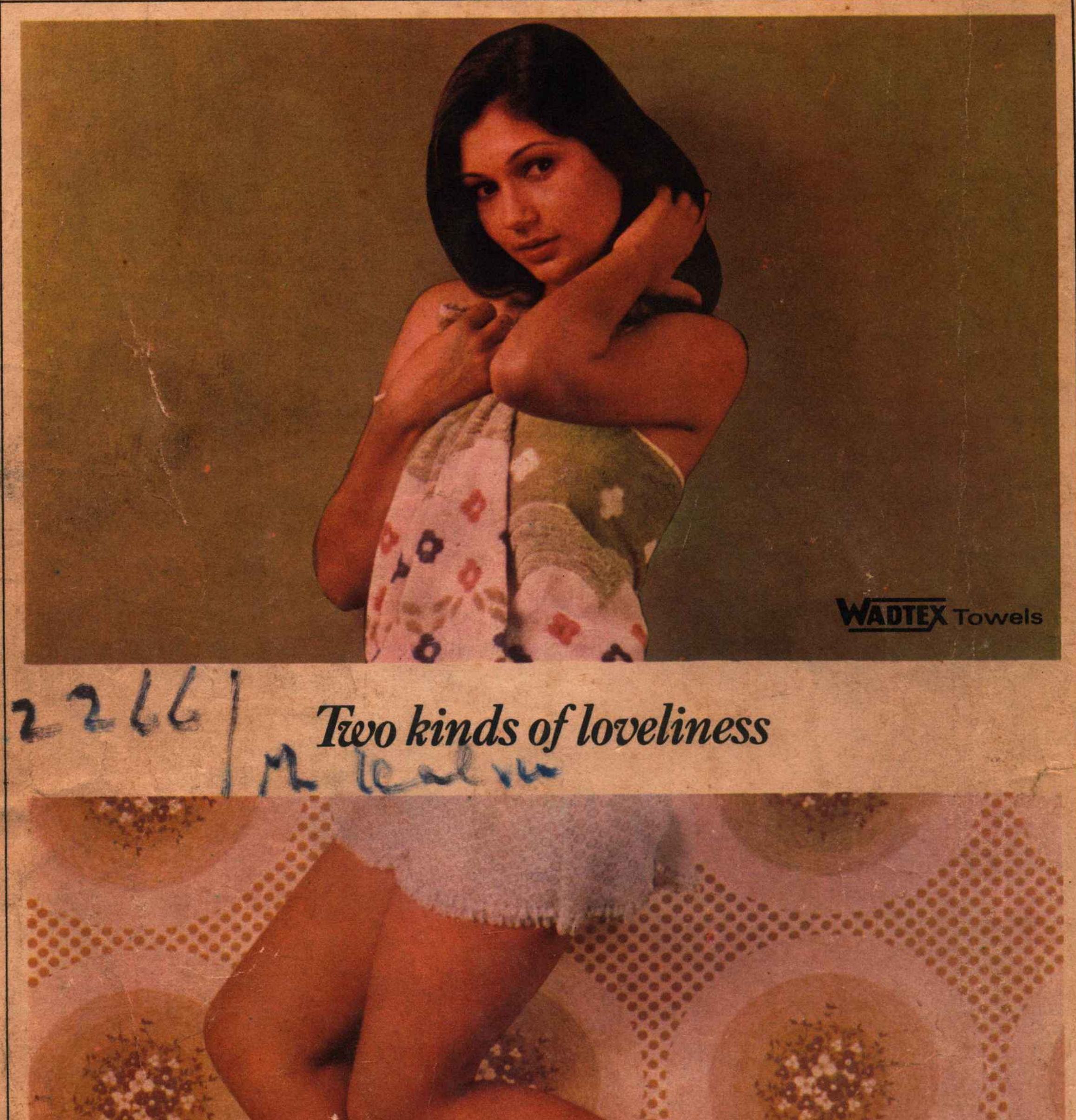
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